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## CASE STUDY

# SmartGrowth – Building Blocks To A Better Future In The Western Bay of Plenty

Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council  
Environment Bay of Plenty, Tangata Whenua



### Presenter

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# **SmartGrowth – Building Blocks To A Better Future In The Western Bay of Plenty**

## **Executive Summary**

SmartGrowth is a programme aimed at developing and implementing a plan for managing growth in the western Bay of Plenty. The SmartGrowth initiative was undertaken in an effort to effectively manage growth in an integrated manner.

The costs of growth were impacting heavily on the Councils (Tauranga City Council Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty), there was minimal co-ordination and sub-regional infrastructure issues were arising which no one authority could address alone. These issues included unco-ordinated lead infrastructure in too many growth areas and no defined locations to provide for long term growth.

SmartGrowth grew out of community concerns about continued rapid population growth and a lack of effective planning to manage this growth. Figures illustrating population and growth from 2001 to 2051 are set out in a table on page 4.

## **Description of the Project / Response**

### Strategy Development

The response to the issue was to develop a 50 year growth management strategy and implementation plan for the Western Bay of Plenty. This plan was SmartGrowth

There was strong political leadership which supported the need to take a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach. It became clear very quickly that no one local authority operating on their own was able to solve the growth planning issues. It needed to be an integrated and aligned response. An independent Chairman was utilised to co-ordinate and manage the political members and this independent involvement was critical to the success of the establishment of this project.

There were several key elements in the early stages of the SmartGrowth planning process.

The first was to gain a credible understanding of the rate of future growth as well as what the key drivers were. For example population migration/the desire to live near the coast. This analysis was necessary to reduce the possibility of future surprises.

Another was to gain a real sense of the kind of place the community wanted the western Bay to be in the years to come. A further challenge was the need for strong leadership and an agreement that all parties would all work together. It was also necessary to ensure protection of the environment for future generations (partly through a more compact urban form) and respect the history and values of the original inhabitants of the area.

The Governance and management structure was put in place early in the project. It did evolve and was modified as the project progressed from strategy development to implementation.

There was a combination of both management and political leadership at the beginning.

### A brief history of SmartGrowth

As it moved from an "idea" for consideration to a formal strategy and action steps the journey went something like this:

#### *Phase one*

The first phase was to develop arrangements between the councils, tangata whenua, and the community to provide a structure for managing the strategy investigation and development. The first phase also enabled funding of the project to be worked through thoroughly to ensure the work can be completed satisfactorily. This phase took six months to complete. It resulted in a clearly agreed project plan between the partners, for the subsequent stages. This was lead by key staff and politician

A broad project plan with the phases was drafted and this was modified as the project progressed.

#### *Phase two*

The second phase began in July 2001. It focussed on researching reasons for growth, likely demands of growth and issues involved in accommodating those demands. Possible responses included the supply of land for housing, business and open space, servicing for water supply, sewer, roads, and stormwater; as well as the protection of natural and cultural heritage. The second phase also included establishment of a communications strategy with the community.

This included a strong communications plan and research was put into the public arena as it became available. There was a high level of public interest as the community has continually raised concerns about growth management in the western Bay of Plenty.

#### *Phase three*

The third phase focused on developing options for accommodating growth, testing and costing these to identify the best option taking into account community needs.

#### *Phase four*

This looked at costing the options and evaluating them.

#### *Phase five*

This phase focused on developing tools for implementing the preferred option, including detailed planning of areas likely to be subject to growth pressure and how the strategy will be paid for.

### *Phase six*

The final development phase was the publication of the final strategy. Public input was also sought on the final strategy. This was completed in April 2004 and launched publicly by the Prime Minister the Rt Hon Helen Clark on May 14 2004.

The strategy development process was overseen by the Implementation Management Group (IMG) (refer below). A full time technical advisor was appointed and a part-time co-ordinator. Project teams were established for each key area with representation from the partner Councils. The project teams together with IMG oversaw the consultant briefs where the research work was undertaken by external consultants.

The total cost for the strategy development phase was approximately \$2 million. A funding formula was agreed and the costs shared between the Councils on this agreed basis.

### *Phase seven*

We are now in the implementation phase of the project. This involves each Council completing specific actions it is responsible for, and the SmartGrowth governance and management structure addressing those actions which have a wider sub-regional impact.

In addition the SmartGrowth development framework i.e those areas to be urbanised and those to be kept rural are being anchored through an amendment to the Regional Policy Statement, by Environment Bay of Plenty.

The development strategy also had a strong influence on identifying and supporting the sub-regions transport needs which were included in the Regional Land Transport Strategy which was completed in September 2004.

### *Communication of the Strategy*

There is a communications team in place with representation from each of the Councils. The SmartGrowth Implementation Committee signs off the communications plan and communications initiatives are overseen very actively by the IMG.

### What does SmartGrowth Tell Us

The SmartGrowth Strategy is a 50 year vision and implementation plan to manage growth in the western Bay of Plenty. It concentrates on the principles of live, work and play in order to provide a balance for growth management.

The population of the sub-region had increased by 14.5% in the period between 1996 and 2001 which equated to 16,500 people. The population in 2001 was 130,000 and this is predicted to rise to 198,000 by 2021 and to 284,000 by 2051, as illustrated below:

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2051</b>
<b>Population</b>	130,000	198,000	284,000
<b>Households</b>	49,000	80,000	119,000

Currently the area contains 3.4% of the nation's population and this is set to rise to 5.2% by 2051. This would result in the area becoming the fourth to fifth largest region in New Zealand.

The area is growing at an extraordinary rate. Every week:

- 100 people arrive from other places
- 52 people leave the area
- 32 new house are built
- 54 more vehicles go on the road, and
- 45 new jobs are created

Families with young children will make up a large proportion of in-migration.

Within the Strategy 75% of future growth is allocated to the Tauranga City Council (TCC) area. The remaining 25% is to be accommodated in the Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC) area. Of the Tauranga City growth, one third will be achieved through higher density redevelopment of two areas of intensification. One is in Mount Maunganui, and the other within the Tauranga isthmus extending from Pyes Pa in the south to Sulphur Point at the Port of Tauranga. The other two thirds will be achieved through raising the development densities within undeveloped land on the edge of the city from 10 households per hectare to 15 households per hectare.

### Governance and Management Structures

The success of SmartGrowth depends on the quality of the working relationships between the agencies responsible for implementation.

The essential difference between SmartGrowth and earlier growth management initiatives in the area is the long-term, formal commitment to collaboration.

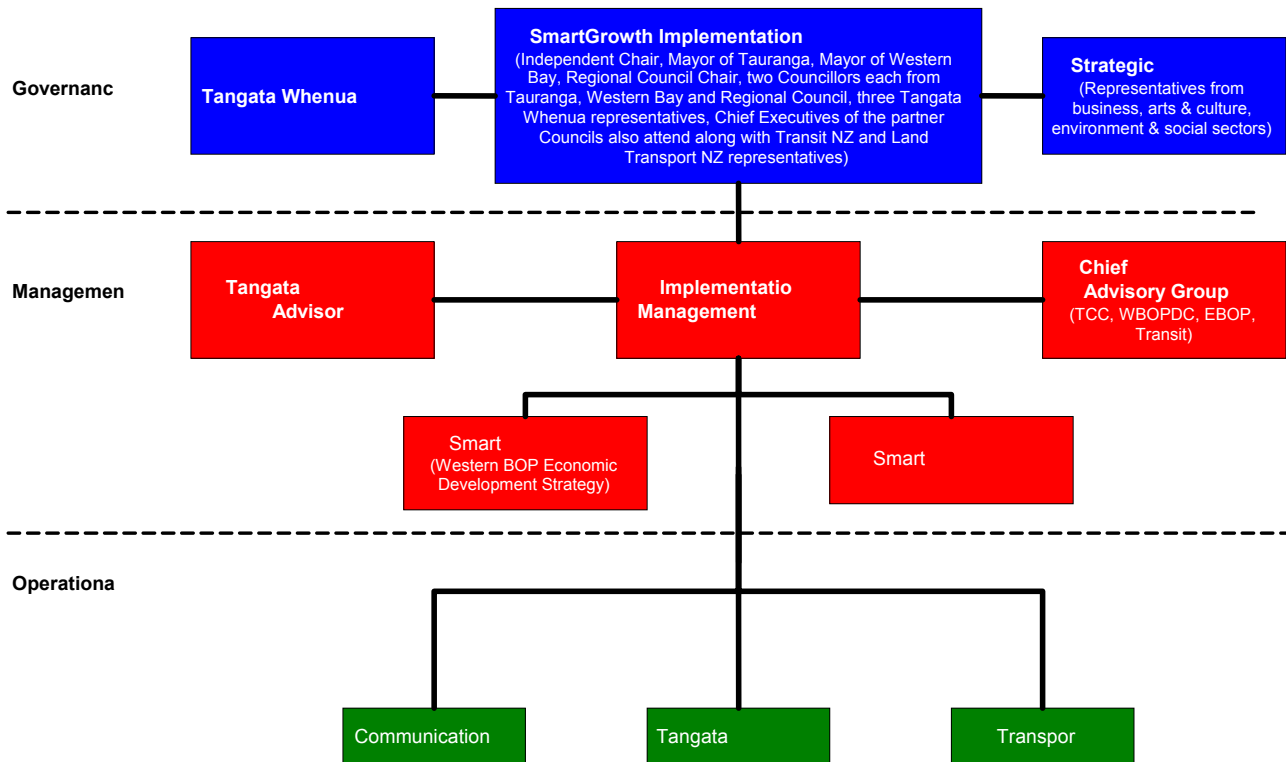
The arrangements were developed jointly by staff and the Councillors. The arrangements were put in place at the beginning of the process.

As already noted political leadership was and continues to be critical.

The independent chair and the SmartGrowth Co-ordinator are funded from the SmartGrowth budget which is contributed to by each of the Councils on the basis of an agreed formula. The Tangata Whenua advisor is partly funded by the Councils and partly by Central Government sources. All other staff are employees of the Councils and based in their respective Councils.

The table below outlines the Governance and Management structure in place.

## Governance and Management Structure



*The SmartGrowth Implementation Committee (SGIC) has the following functions:*

- Growth management leadership
- Overseeing the implementation of the SmartGrowth strategy
- Ensuring organisation systems and resources support the strategy implementation;
- Taking responsibility for progressing those actions specifically allocated to the "SmartGrowth Implementation Committee" in the strategy and making sure the implementation does occur.
- Monitoring and reporting progress against milestones.
- Overseeing the management of the risks identified in implementation.
- Reviewing and recommending adjustments to the strategy if circumstances change.
- Identifying and resolving any consultation inconsistencies between the SmartGrowth strategies and subsequent public consultation processes of the partner Councils.

- Facilitating consultation with the community.
- Selecting and appointing an Independent Chairman and SmartGrowth Coordinator
- Implementing a Memorandum of Understanding be adopted by the Committee to provide a basis for developing working relationships and the resolution of any conflict.

*The Strategic Partners Forum* provides community governance to the SmartGrowth Strategy, with the two broad responsibilities being:

Strategic partners to act as a community audit

- The strategic partners were an integral part of the process within the development of SmartGrowth strategies and actions. This means they have a strong basis of understanding of the issues related to growth management within the western Bay of Plenty sub region.
- Play an important role in acting as a "consumer audit" providing a monitoring function to ensure the strategy and actions are met, not just by local authorities but also by Central Government and community agencies that have lead roles within the strategy.

Strategic partners to act as a knowledge pool for the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee

- As sector agencies the Strategic Partners play a strong role in acting as a steering agent and a knowledge pool to the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee structure, helping guide decisions relating to implementation.
- Many of the Strategic Partners are regional associations of national agencies representing specific sectors. This network of knowledge ensures that the best decisions are made in implementing SmartGrowth
- The Strategic Partners provide support to the SmartGrowth Governance structure in a collaborative fashion rather than in a strict audit and monitoring role.
- Many Strategic Partners have specific roles as either lead or support agencies within the actions of SmartGrowth. This enhances the ability to provide sound community governance advice to the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee structure and identify potential solutions to issues.

The Strategic Partners on-going governance forum is made up of the following organisations, based on a selection criteria of;

- agencies with a national affiliation
- mandate to speak on behalf of sectors effected by the SmartGrowth Strategy
- cover the sub region, which is the scope of the strategy
- represent the four key aspects contained in the Local Government Act 2003 - social, economic, cultural, environmental

- have a structure in place that allows outwards and in wards communication in respect of membership

*The Implementation Management Group (IMG):*

- selects and recommends the appointment of the SmartGrowth Coordinator (SC) to the Chief Executives Advisory Group.
- Oversees the implementation plan, in particular the action milestones, with the SC.
- Receives regular reports from the SC.
- Undertakes and reports on action monitoring and risk management issues via the SC to the SGIC.
- Maintains close links between SmartGrowth and any other related implementation to help achieve a broadly based sustainable development outcome.
- Examines in detail all briefs for Actions assigned to the SGIC before they are issued.
- Reviews all action outputs prior to Joint Committee presentation.
- Ensures that systems and resources are functioning effectively
- Ensures that any related studies and investigations are drawn to the attention of the SC in order to avoid duplication of effort.
- Liaises with the Chief Executives to ensure good understanding and ownership of the project within each of the participating organisations.

The membership of the IMG includes SmartGrowth Advisor, (Chairman), SmartGrowth Implementation Committee Independent Chair, One senior representative (Chief Executive delegate) from each partner council, Communication advisor, and the Tu Pakiri Advisor.

*Chief Executive Advisory Group (CEAG)*

The Chief Executive Advisory Group:

- Promotes SmartGrowth within the culture of each of their organisations.
- Assesses the impact on their organisations of requests for internal resources.
- Supports the setting aside of sufficient funding to complete the Strategy.
- Reviews achievement of action milestones.
- Focuses on inter-organisation process and document alignment.
- Advises the SGIC where necessary.
- Assists with effective and consistent internal communication.

- Recommends the appointment of the SmartGrowth Coordinator to the SGIC.

### *The Combined Tangata Whenua Forum*

This was an integral partner throughout the development of the SmartGrowth strategies and actions. It has continued with this partnering relationship during the implementation of the strategy.

Tangata Whenua have a strong understanding of the growth management issues within the western Bay of Plenty sub region. The responsibilities of the Combined Tangata Whenua Forum include the following:

- Ensuring the Rangitiratanga of the hapu and Iwi (Tangata Whenua values, principles, traditions and customs) are taken into account and maintained throughout the implementation of the strategy.
- Provide a reference group to support the future growth management and development needs of hapu and Iwi.
- Audit on the implementation of the strategy as a key monitoring function for Tangata Whenua in assessing the outcomes of the strategy.
- Providing strong leadership and direction to the SmartGrowth implementation decisions on specific and generic actions affecting Tangata Whenua.
- Providing leadership in the implementation of some actions solely, shared as a member of the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee or as a support to other lead agencies.
- Provide Tangata Whenua with understanding and confidence in the growth and development processes.
- Provide a regional forum for hapu, Iwi and Maori to raise implementation issues. The uses of Marae and specialists workshops have proven to be an effective communication tool in engaging Tangata whenua. These internal networks and techniques are utilised to ensure that momentum of the strategy is maintained.
- Work collaboratively with the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee to use respective agency skills and knowledge or if required the collective knowledge of Combined Tangata Whenua Forum to identify solutions to issues related to implementation of the strategy.
- Provide high quality information to the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee to enable sound decision-making.
- Work collaboratively with the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee to utilise respective agency skills and knowledge or if required collective knowledge of Combined Tangata Whenua Forum to identify solutions to issues related to SmartGrowth implementation.

- Monitor, by acting in a Tangata Whenua audit role of the implementation of SmartGrowth actions against milestones.

The Combined Tangata Whenua Forum is open to all Iwi and hapu within the western Bay of Plenty sub-region

## **Results – Financial and Service Level Impacts**

Since the inception of the project, SmartGrowth has achieved a clear growth strategy for the 50 year period. In addition the following has been achieved:

- A significantly improved relationship between the three Councils at both governance and staff levels
- A significantly improved relationship between the three Councils and Tangata Whenua
- Credibility at a Central Government level and high level of Ministerial engagement and briefing.
- First region in New Zealand to complete a Regional Land Transport Strategy under the Land Transport Act. 2003
- Development of a Regional Rail Strategy (2005)
- Successful completion of a plan change which crosses the boundaries of two local authorities. Hearing panel included members from the three partner Councils.
- Preparation of Draft Long Term Council Community Plans incorporating the actions and financial implications arising from the implementation of SmartGrowth (for each council - TCC, WBOPDC and Environment Bay of Plenty).
- Transportation Joint Officials Priority Projects and Funding Report (JOG), providing \$150 million to the region.
- A Regional Policy Statement strongly supported by the three Councils which provides Urban Limit Lines and defines the growth pattern for the sub-region.
- Joint funding by the three partner Councils of significant infrastructure and land.
- SmartTourism Strategy (2006)
- Facilitated Deed of Co-operation signed between University of Waikato and Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (with SmartGrowth representation on governance board)

## **Prospects / the Future**

The future looks positive for SmartGrowth. The three Councils continue to work well together and support each other. Joint projects and working groups continue to be established as required to deal with specific issues.

The risks have and continue to be the difficulty in actually implementing the Strategy and anchoring it in statutory documents and processes. As we progress the implementation we are moving into changing "people's back yards" and this always raises concerns within the community.

Public reaction/response as with any local authority public process can be both positive and negative. However on balance it has been more positive than negative for the SmartGrowth project. This will continue to be managed proactively.

### **Adaptability / Transferability**

The model of collaborative partnership and effective relationships can be transferred to other situations. The critical success factors are strong leadership and commitment at both the political and senior staff levels.

The model is currently being analysed by the Ministry of Transport for possible use by Government.

### **Conclusions**

SmartGrowth has been the lynchpin to ensure the Western Bay of Plenty manages growth in an integrated manner. Without it we would not have a clear road map ahead and we would not be able to plan our sub-regional infrastructure effectively. The key lessons we are learning over and over again are:

- There must be alignment between land use planning, infrastructure and funding
- You cannot plan growth in isolation around territorial authority boundaries
- Collaboration and political commitment are critical.
- High level strategies of this nature must be anchored within the culture of an organisation for them to be successful. They enable compliance with key Local Government Act 2002 requirements.
- In addition they enable the effects of growth to be priced and paid for in an equitable manner.

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