

Toi Te Ora Public Health
PO Box 2120
TAURANGA 3140
Ph: 0800 221 555
www.toiteora.govt.nz

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Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Private Bag 12803,
Tauranga Mail Centre
TAURANGA 3143

Feedback on Future Urban Growth in Katikati

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board (the DHB) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the future urban growth of Katikati. The DHB is required by the Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote, and protect the health of people and communities; to promote the inclusion and participation in society and independence of people with disabilities; and to reduce health disparities by improving health outcomes for Māori and other population groups.

Whilst health care services are important health interventions, their primary purpose is to manage disease, ill-health and trauma at an individual level. The health and wellbeing of a community is strongly influenced by a wide range of influences beyond the health sector. For instance urban design has a considerable impact on the health and wellbeing of communities. An overview of the linkages between urban planning and health is in the appendix. Of note, mental illness and chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes are health outcomes which are modifiable through good urban design.

The DHB suggests that population growth in Katikati is an opportunity to protect and enhance the wellbeing of its residents and the local environment. The DHB understands that planning activities are triggered by the need to respond to trends such as population growth. However, responding to these trends is not a purpose in itself.

The DHB notes that the premise for this planning activity is *“Katikati is running out of land zoned for housing, and more needs to be made available to meet demand”*. The DHB suggests that the situation is far more complex, and that a number of other trends and issues should be considered when making decisions about the future development of Katikati. These include:

- Population aging and a subsequent change in demand for various housing typologies, neighbourhood characteristics and travel modes
- Rising chronic diseases and mental illness and the need for more active, socially connected communities
- Car dependency and the subsequent transport related social exclusion for those without access to a reliable vehicle. Car dependency also reduces the independent mobility of children and therefore impacts child health and development



- Long term affordability of the maintenance and renewal of infrastructure such as sewerage, drinking water supplies and roading
- Food security and the protection of productive soils
- Climate change impacts including sea level rise and increased flooding events.

Consideration of the combination of these factors leads to a conclusion that more compact development featuring mixed density, mixed land use and high connectivity is a sensible approach for a town like Katikati. The location of new developments in Katikati should be planned on that basis. It is essential that population growth is used as an opportunity to enhance everyday liveability and the quality of the physical environment.

Bearing the above in mind, the DHB makes the following recommendations on the future urban growth of Katikati.

- The Katikati community should be informed of the different approaches to development (intensification vs greenfield) and the pros and cons of each in terms of community and environmental wellbeing as well as affordability over the long term.
- Western Bay of Plenty District Council (Council) should explore ways to incentivize compact development in Katikati; a 15 minute walk to town policy and adopting a regeneration and intensification strategy are two recommendations.
- Western Bay of Plenty District Council should explore ways to develop a community that is attractive to new residents who intend to live, learn, work, play and age in the local community, rather than travel to Tauranga city for daily amenities and employment. Using growth to justify increased roading capacity between Katikati and Tauranga would be inconsistent with this approach.

The DHB is aware that development decisions are of intense public and stakeholder interest. The DHB offers to assist Council in explaining the health and wellbeing benefits to communities of compact development, and to be a public supporter of any Council actions to promote and incentivise this development approach.

Yours sincerely



Sally Webb
Board Chair

Address for service:

Rebecca Culliford
Toi Te Ora Public Health
PO Box 2120
TAURANGA 3140

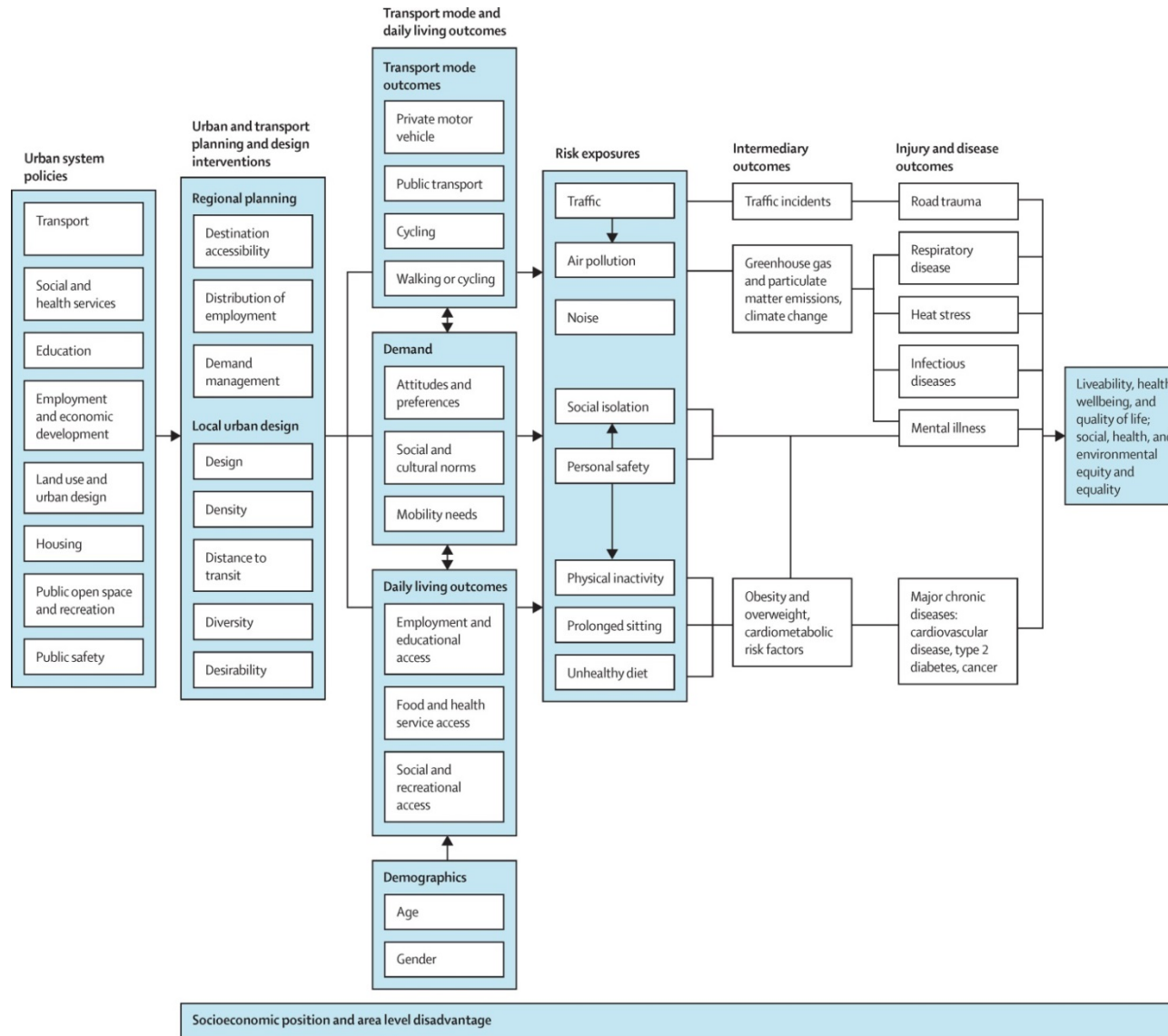
Ph: 0800 221 555

Fax: 07 5770883

enquiries@toiteora.govt.nz



Appendix: Pathways to better health through urban planning and design



Source: Giles-Corti et al (2016) City Planning and Population Health: a Global Challenge. *The Lancet*. 388(10062) p2912-2924. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27671668>