

# When political will triumphs over political ego



**SmartGrowth**

Building blocks to a better future

The political origins of SmartGrowth:  
The journey of Environment Bay of Plenty and  
Western Bay and Tauranga councils toward achieving  
a management strategy for the sustainable future of  
the western Bay and Tauranga sub-regions



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# Introduction

“The horse has bolted!” screamed an editorial of the Bay of Plenty Times in 1997, while across the territorial boundaries of the Western Bay, political leaders screamed for unity in a divided world. [\*1]

During the 1990s, population increase, coastal ribbon development, sprawling ad hoc rural subdivision and rocketing urban expansion had crept up on a region ill-prepared for the pressures that uncontrolled growth brings.

With the region in full gallop, the leaders of Tauranga City Council (at that time Tauranga District Council), Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty were realising the consequences of leaving the stable doors wide open. They headed for damage control.

And so began a journey that, from a shaky start, ended in creating New Zealand’s first and, to date most successful, sub-regional growth management plan – SmartGrowth.

The story of the political origins of SmartGrowth is proof that unity can arise from discord and that olive branches can replace drawn swords. It is an example of the enormous power of political will when that will is inspired by the desire to seek solutions for the benefit of all.

To tell the story of this journey requires trawling through media headlines, archives and council agendas and tapping the memories of the political leaders of the day.

It is a tale of one city, four urban communities and a flourishing rural hinterland under the governance of three councils with polarised agendas, each trying to stake its claim.

## Outline

This report documents the political situation that existed in the sub-regions of western Bay and Tauranga for the decade [1991-2001] leading to the formation, in 2001, of the initial working party that began to draft a 50-year sub-regional management plan.

SmartGrowth in its first informal stage began on 27 September 2001 with a call by the initial Strategic Growth Working Party for strategic partners

in the wider community to take part in the sub-region's growth strategy. The Working Party comprised three representatives from each of the local authorities – Tauranga District Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty – plus three tangata whenua representatives from the three iwi of the region – Ngaiterangi, Ngati Ranginui and Ngati Pukenga.

This Working Party selected Bill Wasley as the independent chairperson and Ken Tremaine as the group's consultant. The Working Party then set a three-year timeframe to draft the growth strategy.

Three years later, on 3 May 2004, that timeframe was met with the SmartGrowth 50-year strategy and implementation plan being adopted by the partnership of Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty and tangata whenua [representatives from the iwi of the region]. Prime Minister Helen Clark officially launched SmartGrowth in Tauranga on 14 May 2004.

This report explores the political background to the launch of SmartGrowth. It canvasses the personal reflections of the respective leaders during the years leading to the formation of SmartGrowth. These are: Western Bay Mayor Maureen Anderson; Tauranga Mayor Noel Pope and Bay of Plenty Regional Council Chairman John Keaney.

In addition, views of the current [early 2007] Tauranga City Mayor Stuart Crosby are included, as are those of the current Regional Council Chairman John Cronin, Regional Councillor Jim Pringle, iwi representative Alf McCausland and SmartGrowth implementation manager Ken Tremaine, and the current Mayor of Western Bay of Plenty, Graeme Weld.

Comment from List MP Margaret Wilson, who lives in Tauranga, is also included. Ms Wilson has also been a strong advocate for the aims of SmartGrowth and to that end has worked solidly in the background to bend central Government's ear to the needs of the sub-region western Bay.

The report also touches briefly on the impact on SmartGrowth's early progress of leadership change in all three territorial authorities as a result of the 2001 local body elections.

As a useful summary this report includes a chronological snapshot of headlines from the Bay of Plenty Times daily newspaper from 1999 to 2001. In conclusion there is a brief summary of the success of SmartGrowth since its launch in 2004.

# The Story

## Background

Growth began tangibly impacting on the western Bay sub-region in the early 1990s, about the same time as local and regional government restructuring resulted in the re-grouping of historical territorial authorities under wide-sweeping boundary changes.

Local Government Reform in 1989, closely followed by the introduction of the Resource Management Act (RMA) in 1991, dramatically changed the structural regulatory and framework of regional and territorial authorities. The restructuring reduced the number of city and district councils from 705 to 69 and added a community voice through the establishment of 159 community boards. The newly-formed regional authority was predominantly charged with administering the RMA.

Under the changes, Local Government became more relevant to its communities, operating more effectively, efficiently and openly – obligated under new legislation to be accountable and consultative.

Not only did each 're-formed' authority have a new boundary and a new ratepayer base, the RMA meant all councils were far more involved in determining, regulating and enforcing the impacts of development on their respective districts.

Growth became more closely monitored and regulated under the new framework. Consequently, councils became more aware of growth that was occurring and the historical laissez faire approach of previous councils came home to roost.

## A Growth Explosion

Explosive growth was impacting severely on the whole region. More people were choosing to live in the western Bay and Tauranga, developers were looking for more land for housing and, as more people arrived, demand for employment increased but 'greenfields' land close to the city for commercial or industrial development was becoming scarce. Increased population had outstripped predictions and was putting pressure on historically inadequate infrastructure and services.

Roads – both city and rural – were not built to cope; sewerage reticulation was non-existent in the rural urban areas; the city's sewerage reticulation

was limited in its reach to the newly-acquired coastal suburb of Papamoa; stormwater systems weren't built for the additional run-off from increasing rural dwellers and potable water quality in the rural areas fell way below Ministry of Health drinking water standards.

Furthermore the councils' planning rules were relatively inflexible and it was not until the pressure of growth translated in to developers' demands for more subdividable land that both Tauranga and Western Bay councils were forced to rewrite their District Plan rules.

The political leaders of the day appeared caught in the headlights. Parochial politicians were fiercely protective of their respective "patch". They were grappling with the new demands of the local government reforms and with the complexities of the Resource Management Act.

Western Bay and Tauranga district councils were also somewhat confused about the role of the Regional Council under the new local government structure. The Regional Council, which was charged with the administering of the RMA, did not have the trust of the Western Bay or Tauranga councils and, as a new type of regional authority, no one was quite sure how it fitted in the system.

However, rather than share their problems and seek solutions, politicians took sides. They became defensive of their 'kingdoms', trading criticism rather than advice and their mistrust of each other magnified. Distanced by discord, politicians hurled verbal grenades across the political boundaries while desperately trying to tourniquet the growth bleed.

From this political turmoil, the seeds of collaboration began to be sown... but it took a few years.

### **The political scenario in the 1990s**

In the Bay of Plenty, the new Regional Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council [Environment Bay of Plenty], led by chairman John Keaney, had replaced the former Bay of Plenty United Council. Keaney had served more than 13 years in politics – as former Rotorua County chairman, as Rotorua District Council Mayor and he was then on the Regional Council for nine years, including two terms as Chairman.

In Tauranga, the Tauranga District Council, led by Mayor Nobby Clarke from 1989 to 1995 and by Noel Pope from 1995 to 2001, had extended its boundaries to embrace the formerly independent borough of Mount Maunganui and also Papamoa – which had previously been part of the former Tauranga County Council.



The balance of the mainly rural former Tauranga County Council had been renamed Western Bay of Plenty District Council and included the four urban communities of Te Puke, Omokoroa and Katikati, with the addition of Waihi Beach which had previously been under the Hauraki territorial authority.

Western Bay District Council was led by Mayor Joan Keheley until 1996 at which time she was forced to resign due to ill health. Her deputy Maureen Anderson took the helm in a by-election and was formally elected to the mayoralty in the next Local Body elections and remained in leadership until she retired in 2001.

## Trends of growth: In the city

While western Bay of Plenty sub-region's growth was more a phenomenon of the mid-1990s onwards, Tauranga city bowed to growth pressure at the turn of the decade in response to an unexpected – and unusual trigger. In 1991 the region's kiwifruit industry, which had until then been booming, hit a massive downturn, forcing many orchardists into financial crisis and desperate to cash-up their land assets.

Orchardists with significant canopy hectares close to the city boundaries had an obvious trump card – they looked to Tauranga District Council for their salvation. Stuart Crosby – now Tauranga mayor – was then a young first-term councillor and he clearly remembers the council's response.

“We had orchardists in the Bethlehem-Wairoa area saying – ‘please rezone our land from rural to residential so that we can subdivide and get out of financial strife’,” Crosby recalls. “That triggered a planning process and a small urban growth strategy for Tauranga, led by council's in-house planners Craig Batchelar and Bill Wasley. We opened up fronts in Bethlehem, Pyes Pa, Ohauiti, Welcome Bay and Papamoa – but what we had no anticipation for was the pace of that growth – from 1993 onward, growth took over and growth was controlling council.”

Crosby recalls Council's chief executive of the time, Paula Thompson, saying the Council was continually “playing catch-up footie” with infrastructure, services, amenities and facilities.

In addition to city-fringe growth, the larger properties in the established inner city were another carrot to developers – they capitalised on those larger properties by adding ‘infill’ housing.



*Crosby: “Growth was controlling the council.”*

The pace of infill caught Council by surprise and, recalls Crosby, before it could dam the flood, in one year alone more than 50 per cent of the city's new dwellings were infill houses in the central business district.

The explosion of infill put greater pressure on the city's existing infrastructure and, despite a reasonable spare capacity in such services as sewerage and water, the city's roading network proved woefully inadequate, particularly the major arterials.

In hindsight, says Crosby, Council today makes no bones of the fact it seriously misread the growth and failed to take responsible action in time to prevent a roading crisis. "We abused Transit New Zealand's roading system by assuming they [Transit] would make the roads bigger and better as the city grew. But they didn't and we have had to remedy that."

Transit's failure to recognise the level of growth in the region led to it [Transit] under-investing in the entire Bay of Plenty roading network – a factor that has since come back to roost time and again.

## **Trends of growth: In the country**

Across the city's border, the rural hinterland of the western Bay was also groaning under growth pains. But, like its city neighbour, Western Bay of Plenty District Council was caught napping.

Made up of four urban catchments, surrounded by highly productive pastoral and horticultural land, the Western Bay was attracting interest from within and outside the region as a desirable lifestyle destination. In 1997 there had been a 17.1% in growth in population in the past five years making the Western Bay the third largest growth rate in New Zealand and predicted to double in the next 25 years.

This was fuelled in part by local farming families with large landholdings who were approaching retirement age and were seeking to capitalise on their land asset by subdividing off parcels of their farms – generally on their boundary edges.

The council was faced with increasing applications for subdivision consents that, in many instances, could not be declined because of the generous parameters of its District Plan. Ad hoc subdivision had begun sprouting in clusters – often in the far-flung parts of the district where unsealed, narrow rural roads simply could not cope with the increased traffic pressure resulting from subdivision.

Further pressures came on the Council as these scattered subdivisions became populated by so-called lifestylers seeking “the good life”. These were mostly former city dwellers with little knowledge of the realities of country living and who very quickly complained about dusty roads, noisy stock, smelly pigs and crowing roosters impacting on their dreams of peaceful rural tranquillity.

As growth spread its tentacles through the western Bay, it wasn’t only the roads that proved inadequate. Other big ticket infrastructure – sewerage, potable water, stormwater, landfills – were all light years behind the growth.

As former Western Bay mayor Maureen Anderson recalls: “The more scattered the growth you get in the rural area the greater the demand to get rid of dusty roads and to have them sealed, plus all the other ‘niceties’ that go with roads. When you have growth that is greater than a national or regional average, you have to be able to build or fund the infrastructure for that growth.”

### **Addressing growth independently**

By the late 1990s moves to address the growth in both Tauranga and western Bay sub-regions had actually begun at senior staff level in each council but each was acting totally independently and with no cross-boundary discussion. Evidence of growth was not difficult to find. Subdivision requests were increasing, building and resource consent applications were on the rise, traffic counts were increasing on rural roads, house and property sales were rising and population statistics revealed an influx to both the city and the rural environs.

The 1996 Census revealed that the western Bay district of 212,000 hectares had a population of 34,971 of whom 15,676 lived in urban areas and 19,296 were rural. This was a 17 per cent growth from the 1991 Census and predictions were that the district population would double in the next 25 years at an annual growth of two to three per cent.

Realising the fragility of their district’s infrastructure (particularly roading), in 1997 Western Bay District Council senior planning staff began drafting a radical rural plan change to halt further subdivision on unsealed and under-width roads. This plan change was later to be called Fields for the Future [proposed Variation No 1/Change No 1].

“In gathering that information it became very apparent that the growth wasn’t just in the rural areas,” recalls Maureen Anderson. “Clearly it was

in Tauranga also, however Western Bay council went on with its Fields for the Future as there were fears that no overall planning was being done for growth.”

### **Fields for the Future**

Fields for the Future was launched and implemented on Saturday 22 November 1997 with the announcement in the Bay of Plenty Times headlined by - Freeze halts rural subdivision - and an editorial from the editor of the day congratulating the Western Bay of Plenty District Council for having the “courage to take firm action” against growth.

Fields by its very nature [an attempt to regulate against further rural subdivision on unsealed and under-width roads] was destined to spark controversy but no one could have anticipated the level of antagonism it spawned, nor the ultimate damage it would wreak on the Western Bay District Council.

But the Council did have its allies.

When it went into the statutory hearing process for Fields, Western Bay found an ally in Environment Bay of Plenty. The Regional Council was obliged to support the proposed plan change because it aligned with the principles of the Regional Council’s Regional Policy Statement, which was part of its statutory responsibility under the RMA. At the public hearing of Fields Regional Councillor Joy Drayton (a former Tauranga councillor) supported the intent of Fields.

She said to delay subdivision would promote the “consolidation of existing urban areas, avoid sporadic and sprawling subdivision and help ensure that the economic viability of the district’s productive soils was not reduced.” [\*2]

Although it must be noted that some Regional Councillors were of a different mind. Ian Noble (a former Western Bay District Councillor) likened Western Bay’s attempt to stop subdivision on unsealed roads as “trying to crack a walnut with a sledgehammer”. [\*3] Some farmers and orchardists supported Fields because they hated the wonderfully productive land of the western Bay being traded for houses.

The extreme dictates of Fields raised furore among western Bay developers, who already had subdivision plans under way and it alarmed those landowners planning to turn their land into cash. It also angered private property owners who resented Council’s interference in their property rights. Surveyors, who were making good money from the subdivision growth,



Anderson:  
*"Fields was the catalyst."*

also climbed onto the protest bandwagon, claiming subdivision was good for the economy.

But the greatest foe of Council's unpopular plan was a fierce lobby group of rural property owners calling themselves the Rural Users Association (RUA). This group was so determined to banish Fields and ridicule the Council that it successfully campaigned for five of its members to be elected on to the Council in the local body elections of 1998.

RUA became known as the "tight five", hell bent on obstructing any moves by Council to stand in the way of private property owners' rights. At the formal hearing of Fields in 1998, 2000 submissions were presented opposing the plan, hundreds fuelled by RUA's lobbying.

After a lengthy hearing process and enormous political pressure, the Council was forced to water down its plan and take the brakes off its proposal to ban subdivision on unsealed roads.

Instead the Council amended the plan, plus hammered rural subdividers with hefty fees – called development impact fees – in its continuing attempt to slow growth.

Western Bay Councillors – particularly Councillor Graeme Weld – were adamant that those who were creating the growth [i.e. developers/subdividers] should carry their share of the cost of that growth. Development Impact Fees were [and continue to be] an invaluable tool for spreading the cost of growth more fairly.

The Fields debacle and the undermining actions of RUA seriously damaged the credibility of Mayor Anderson and her council and forced Anderson further into defensive mode as she staunchly defended Council's rationale for taking action against growth.

While the intended extent of Fields failed, the research gained through the exercise brought home to everyone that something bigger on a broader scale had to be done to haul in rampant growth.

"I would go so far as to say that document [Fields] was the catalyst [to that]," Anderson says.

## City and country worlds apart

It was no secret that mayors Pope and Anderson were not the best of mates.

Two very strong-willed leaders with personal agendas in their respective patch – each wanted to champion the antidote to the region’s growth. Tauranga District Council, led by Mayor Noel Pope, had distanced itself from the Fields furore but had begun its own research into how to handle its own growth.

Pope recalls his council’s increasing frustration at Western Bay District Council’s refusal to acknowledge that it should contribute financially to upgrading the city’s services and amenities. As the whole region’s growth became more of a pressing issue for each council, Tauranga District Council maintained that Western Bay had an obligation to contribute to funding the city’s amenities because they were enjoyed also by rural ratepayers.

Furthermore the city’s roading pressure wasn’t only coming from within. The city was a service centre for the western Bay, so people commuting into the city from western Bay communities and lifestyle blocks were causing added strain. Pope believes the Western Bay District Council’s reluctance to commit to the city was a perception that Tauranga District Council was the “big Ayatollah”.

“They thought we [Tauranga] saw them as just the bloody peasants and a nuisance to us and that we would go over the top of them – which of course we never intended,” says Pope. “I don’t think they [Western Bay council] could see the growth because of all the internal politics that were being played.”

Although he generally kept his distance from becoming embroiled in his neighbour’s troubles, when approached at the time by the media about Western Bay’s reluctance to financially contribute to the city, Pope was reported to say: “It’s like the Wild West out there! It takes us back a decade in trust and confidence in the relationship between the two councils.” [\*4].

In true form, Anderson never failed to equal the score. The next day when her council met for an annual budget meeting she began by summoning her councillors for a “collective prayer” which she uttered in just one word: “Yeehaa!” [\*5]

“Noel and I frequently fired broadsides over the boundary,” reflects Anderson. “One would say something the other didn’t like, so you’d lob a



*Pope: “I don’t think Western Bay could see the growth.”*



*Illustration of “Yeegah” from the BOP Times*



grenade back. But nonetheless, there was a lot of groundwork being done and this was initiated at the skilled staff level – not at the political level.”

## **Behind the politics**

Pope gives his staff – particularly his chief executive Paula Thompson – full credit for bringing a strong growth strategy to the table. “Paula had a great brain – she was one of the key players. I said to her ‘go away and work out some way of doing it [a growth study]’ ... and she did.”

Likewise, Anderson praises the work of her senior staff, particularly her chief executive Glenn Snelgrove and Council’s director of governance and monitoring, Brian Croad, for gathering the research and initiating growth plans that eventually reached the political level.

It was just as well that, despite their political leaders being at odds, savvy staff at both councils were simply getting on with their knitting. They realised the implications of growth and were working away quietly away to address the core issues.

“Those people [staff] need accolades for being able to work with everybody and to bring ideas forward and initiate discussions with the chief executives of the councils. They knew we had a mammoth task ahead,” Anderson says.

## **Amalgamation a panacea?**

As growth became an increasing political problem, the concept of amalgamating Tauranga and Western Bay councils, and part of the regional functions, into a unitary council starting bubbling in the political conversation. It became a real political potato referred to as the ‘A’ word – favoured by the city but a total anathema to the Western Bay council. The Regional Council supported amalgamation of Tauranga and Western Bay, but not the transfer of regional functions.

Pope – and also Regional Council Chairman John Keaney – were strong proponents for amalgamation but Anderson simply refused to discuss it. Keaney believed governance should be under one authority – he had seen it work in Rotorua since 1981 when Rotorua County and City merged into Rotorua District Council.

“Noel [Pope] and I both believed that Tauranga could be one authority because of the tremendous growth,” says Keaney.

In Tauranga, hints were being dropped into Tauranga District's draft strategic plan Vision 2020 in 1998 that it would like to see a wider western Bay incorporating Tauranga and run by a single unitary authority, continuing Noel Pope's wish to incorporate some of the Regional Council functions.[\*10]

The western Bay's historical determination to retain, at all cost, its independence and rural identity, became further entrenched in the wake of the 1989 reforms. This was accompanied by defensiveness as Western Bay council perceived Tauranga muscling in to boss them around and force rural ratepayers to contribute to the city's growth.

A reflection of the lack of communication between the two leaders at the time was Pope's belief that Western Bay District Council was blind to the extent of its growth. He recalls: "They were growing in such a fragmented way from Pukehina and Maketu to Katikati – they weren't quite able to understand that at some point in time they were going to be in trouble.

"You can get away with that for a while... then all of a sudden you're in trouble. Amalgamation for me included the two councils and the whole of the western Bay, so that we could put everything together in a strategic plan... but instead we had everybody doing things in isolation.

"The rural people just didn't know what to do about the city slickers. They were so busy fighting amongst themselves that they weren't looking at the big picture and suddenly they were losing ground. They had no feel for the future," says Pope.

Left largely in the dark about Fields until it was in the public arena, Pope says he wasn't surprised it failed in its original intent. "They were trying to contain what was inevitable and could never be contained." But neither was Tauranga making great headway in tackling its own growth.

## **Biting the bullet**

The turning point, Pope believes, was in 1998, when his chief executive Paula Thompson embarked on a sub-regional growth study which she developed with input from government policy analysts, Tauranga MP Margaret Wilson and well-researched statistical data. "Paula," said Pope, "had the brains to come up with something strong."

But when Pope took the draft proposal across the border to Anderson in the western Bay, she wanted nothing to do with it. Pope recalls: "I said to her over a cuppa – Maureen, what do you think of this?" To which she replied:



“If you guys are hell bent on expansion and you’ve got yourselves in the cart, we’re not interested in any of that rubbish. The growth study is not on our agenda – end of story.”

Undeterred by Western Bay District Council's lack of interest, Pope went back to his own council, won \$1m funding for the study and did it anyway. Developed into a strong plan, Tauranga District Council's Strategic Directions was a blueprint for the region's sustainable growth for the next 50 years. The study focused on the potential for, and the ramifications of, growth for the western Bay-Tauranga sub-region. [\*6,7] A pivotal principle of this document was Tauranga District Council's relationship with Western Bay.

Strategic Directions was less aggressive than earlier council drafts on the possibility of amalgamation. It recognised that the two districts were inextricably intertwined and that it was in everybody's best interest to take a co-operative approach to planning and major infrastructural projects.

By this time, central Government could see the need for something to be done in the region and agreed to involve its agencies to help tackle the growth. Government's involvement was the turning point and this prompted a submission to Western Bay from Tauranga District Council asking for money to put into the city's growth strategy.

Despite reluctance to have Tauranga poking its nose into their patch, Western Bay conceded to put up \$50,000 as a pledge of support towards the 50-year growth strategy. [\*8] With central Government already indicating support for the city's plan, Western Bay would have been unwise to remain outside.

It is interesting to note that, at the time of Western Bay District Council's decision to contribute, its senior planning manager, Brian Croad, was reported as saying the “lynch pin” to the success of the sub-regional plan would be for the two councils to achieve an effective and willing political relationship.

“There needs to be a real desire to make joint alliancing work for the big sub-regional growth issues... Tauranga now wishes to find a way to move forward but, unless there's political agreement, nothing will happen,” Croad said. [\*11]

## The West-East relationship

Environment Bay of Plenty (with headquarters in the eastern Bay of Plenty) was becoming increasingly concerned at growth in the west, as then chairman John Keaney recalls. “We recognised the tremendous growth taking place by 1995 and also the projected growth and we, as a Regional Council, were concerned that the infrastructure was not keeping pace with that growth.

“Growth was in Te Puke and Omokoroa and there were no real constraints on the ribbon development in Papamoa and along the state highway between Bethlehem, Te Puna and Omokoroa.” Keaney was also perturbed at the constant warring between the two territorial authorities and believed that the region simply had to pull together.

Relations between the Regional Council and the two territorial authorities were often frosty and the region was often the butt of scorn from some Tauranga council politicians. Tauranga and Western Bay councils resented interference by the Regional Council on local matters because they believed it to be out of touch with western Bay issues and they became particularly prickly at the Regional Council’s powers when it came to issuing resource consent for development.

Keaney recalls: “We were getting flak when it came to issuing resource consents. We were seen as the ogre who was putting brakes on development.”

Stuart Crosby, a councillor at the time, sums up the perception. “We saw them [the Regional Council] as a very wealthy organisation with millions of dollars under the mattress and they were not releasing any [of it], while we in the Western Bay and Tauranga councils were battling away with this growth issue... plus they were taking rates off us. So they were not appreciated and their chair was from Rotorua and very parochial to Rotorua, and not supportive of Western Bay and Tauranga.”

## Where to from there

A fundamental dysfunction was crippling the three councils – communication breakdown.

Politically, no one was talking to each other and, like a boil, it had to burst of its own accord or be lanced. It was political will that finally took up the knife.



*Keaney: “We were seen as the ogre ...”*

## From loggerheads to olive branch

In early 2001, a newcomer to the Regional Council, John Cronin (formerly a Tauranga councillor for 12 years) was greatly perturbed at the ongoing conflict between Western Bay and Tauranga councils and, like Keaney, he was concerned at the lack of united effort to tackle growth.

With a mind for sound reasoning and negotiation, Cronin was keen to get councillors talking to one another. Keaney encouraged Cronin to use his personal acquaintance and knowledge of the city councillors to get everyone talking to each other.

Cronin recalls Keaney taking him aside and saying: “You have contacts within Western Bay [Graeme Weld and Norm Bruning] – you get them all together.” Cronin adds: “We knew we had to collectively deal to the growth – we had no grand vision, we just wanted to stop the in-fighting. If we had done nothing this place would be in a mess – we would have had uncontrolled development and pressures put on by landowners and developers that could not have been contested by the councils because the political pressures would have been too great.”

Another newcomer to the Regional Council in 2001 – Jim Pringle, a resident of western Bay – shared Cronin’s concerns and offered to help. Jim was, by nature, a conciliator and a good negotiator. He also got along well with Pope. The time was ripe for someone to start the process.

Pringle recalls a critical turning point in his political career. It was the day Pope called him to his office and challenged him to facilitate informal meetings of all councillors to “get people talking together”. Pope wanted to get everyone around the table – he wanted to get the confidence of everyone in the three councils. He saw Pringle as someone who could achieve this.

Pope also recalls that day. “We needed to quietly get these meetings going,” he says. “Jim was a nice, gentle sort of a person ... so I said to him – ‘Jim - you can do it mate - good luck’.”

Pringle too clearly remembers that time: “Noel [Pope] was the trigger. We were all concerned at what was happening in the media. Western Bay, Tauranga District and the Regional Council were only talking to each other through the newspapers... and they were only throwing mud at each other. That was the political method of conversation.



*Cronin: “We had no grand vision – we just wanted to stop the in-fighting.”*

“Noel said to me – Jimmy [he always called me Jimmy] – you need to get these people to talk to each other... they don’t know each other as individuals.”

It was decided to arrange confidential, informal meetings of all Western Bay councillors, Tauranga councillors and the locally-based Environment Bay of Plenty councillors. These meetings were to be held at a neutral venue – the Tauranga Club on Devonport Rd, now Devonport Towers. The first meeting was held on 24 May 2000, 4.30pm - 7.30pm.

Invitations were sent to Environment Bay of Plenty councillors from Tauranga and Western Bay, namely, Ian Noble, Jenny Sneddon, Athole Herbert and John Cronin and to all councillors of both Western Bay and Tauranga councils. Each councillor was asked to contribute to the agenda priority issues for discussion and, at every meeting, councillors were seated at nominated positions to prevent any block-seating by members of the same council.

Facilitated by Jim Pringle and chaired by rotating councillors, those confidential monthly meetings – to which every councillor voluntarily attended – were held under Chatham House rules. They continued for almost two years. They were always held in the old The Tauranga Club building – and the media never got a wheeze of them. At the end of each meeting a social time was spent over drinks and finger food – paid for out of the personal pockets of councillors.

These meetings were a serious meeting of minds, where critical issues could be discussed freely on neutral territory, without the presence of media or the constraints of a council chamber.

They were an ice-breaker, enabling an understanding of each other’s personal views.

Friends were made, barriers broken down and perceptions toppled.

Over time, those meetings were the launch pad for ideas that would become sub-regional strategies, planning policies and political alliances that ultimately would form the platform on which SmartGrowth was based.

Topics brainstormed at those meetings included: Growth management; cross-boundary issues; solid waste management; stormwater management; recreation facilities; regional parks; harbour and lakes; the economic development of the Western Bay; amalgamation; benefits of environmental protection (sewerage reticulation); tourism; public transport; future water sources; regional development and resource consent procedures in relation to the Resource Management Act (RMA).



*Pringle: “They were only throwing mud at each other.”*

In hindsight, every councillor now concedes that those meetings were the breakthrough.

As John Cronin says: “At the time we just wanted to achieve peace between the councils and to get the councillors together to understand each other’s points of view. Through those meetings we began to get a consensus of views. In all the years I had spent as a local government politician [since 1985], that was the first joint meeting of councillors in that time – it had never happened before!”

As Jim Pringle explains: “The neutral territory was one of the biggest single values because no one liked each other’s council – each one was top dog. There was quite a bit of tension at the first meeting – Ian [Noble] did an excellent job of chairing.

“But as time progressed everyone expressed their opinion completely freely. You could see the tension evaporate and the focus start reverting to the actual issues of interest to us all... There was no press, no decision-making and everyone was expressing personal opinions – they weren’t debating as in a council chamber. It was a totally non-threatening environment – and it worked.”

Those meetings embodied the political origin of SmartGrowth.

As the facilitator of those meetings, Pringle recalls a particularly proud moment – the “cutting of the cake” to celebrate the united effort of the councils to achieve unity. The cake was cut by the three leaders of the time – Anderson, Pope and Keaney. “I invited them up to the table and handed over the knife,” says Pringle.

“I said to them – ‘I would not have considered handing over this knife at the start of our original meetings because you may have used it on each other! But happily I now have complete confidence in the unity and co-operation that has been built’.”

As Tauranga mayor Stuart Crosby, who was then a young but influential councillor, says: “Those meetings were fantastic. It should not be underestimated that those informal meetings were the forerunner to the political relationship of SmartGrowth when it got under way. A critical part of SmartGrowth was the inception work and if we had not started working on political relationships before the formal meetings [for the growth strategy] I question whether SmartGrowth would have been the success it has been – we would have continued to play politics.



*Cutting of the cake.*



“I would hate to think what our two regions would have looked like if we had not implemented SmartGrowth – it would have been a shambles, an absolute shambles.”

The outcome of the meetings was a formalising of actions into the forum that was to become SmartGrowth. “That was history making,” recalls Cronin. “Because each council had to take it back to their councillors and put it into a planning process that we were all going to commit to.”

## The ship is launched

The unity achieved by these meetings continued. On 15 May 2002 the group again met for an “informal” chaired by Jim Pringle. Held at the Hotel Armitage [formerly Willow Park], the meeting followed a SmartGrowth meeting and workshop. On Wednesday 25 July, 2002, again at the Hotel Armitage, another “informal” meeting of the team was held for a particularly momentous occasion.

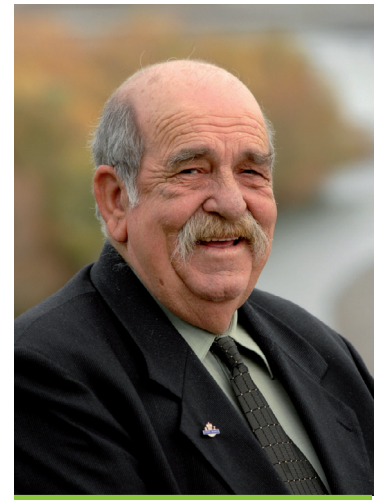
Chaired by John Cronin, this meeting was held after the Strategic Growth Committee [chaired by Bill Wasley] had signed off Stage One of SmartGrowth. As the agenda noted: NB: This is an auspicious occasion as it signifies “the ship is launched.” In other words, they had achieved their mission – they had paved the road to SmartGrowth.

On 29 October 2003 another joint informal meeting was held, this time at the Bureta Park Motor Inn and chaired by Ian Noble. The agenda, written by Jim Pringle, read: “As SmartGrowth draws to its final stages, I would suggest that it is important for this type of discussion to include ALL councillors.” Topic Number One is worth noting for its wording: SmartGrowth Implementation and how to involve the team.

## Ship hits rough waters

It must be noted that in the elections of 2001 a major sea change occurred in the political leadership of the three councils. In Tauranga, Pope did not stand for re-election and was replaced by Jan Beange – a lawyer and a newcomer to the political scene. Beange embraced SmartGrowth, but having been outside of local body politics during all those formative years, she was a passive but supportive participant in its progress.

In western Bay, two-term mayor Anderson also had decided to hang up her chain after a bruising reign. The mayoralty passed to the hands of



*Weld: A strong influence in the development of policy for infrastructure in the Western Bay.*

Graeme Weld – a long-standing Te Puke farmer and a staunch advocate of rural people with a long record in local and farming politics, including 12 consecutive years as a Western Bay Councillor.

The local media announced his leadership takeover as the district passing to a “stalwart with a safe pair of hands.” [\*12 BOPT 24 August 2001] Weld had been a Western Bay Councillor for years with a depth of political experience and an intimate knowledge of the district’s development. He grasped the dangers ahead for a district so behind the eight ball in its infrastructure and he was champing at the bit to make a difference.

As a councillor, Weld was a persistent “terrier” in pushing the council to develop policy for roading and other infrastructure, long before a growth strategy was on the drawing board.

Like his predecessor Anderson, Weld was an opponent of amalgamation, defending the integrity and independence of an autonomous Western Bay. Moreover, he had a deep mistrust of the Regional Council – believing it to wield too much power and being too supportive of amalgamating Tauranga and Western Bay.

Furthermore, Weld’s relationship with former chair Keaney [also a farmer and a staunchly parochially “Rotorua” rural man] had never been particularly close. In light of Weld gaining election as Western Bay mayor in 2000, it was perhaps fortuitous that the elections also brought leadership change at the Regional Council. Keaney retired and the chair was passed to John Cronin.

Cronin, a Tauranga accountant, was well-versed in local politics having served as a Tauranga District Councillor for four terms. Despite their councils being political foes, Cronin had built good relationships with Western Bay Councillors – particularly Weld and Norm Bruning.

And so it was that, at the most critical stage of SmartGrowth, those who had been at the helm in its formative years, all faded into political retirement and the future of SmartGrowth was left to rely totally on that heavyweight political support continuing. Beange had no reason not to support SmartGrowth. Cronin had every reason to see it through, having been so integral to the peace-making process between the three councils. Weld – it would have been assumed – would have been equally as supportive of SmartGrowth. But it was Weld who rocked the boat.

Once elected to the mayoralty, Weld became a dominating personality in SmartGrowth.

As recalls Cronin—on at least three occasions at the meetings of the Strategic Growth Working Party, Weld threatened to take “the whole [Western Bay] team” out. “I remember one meeting at Willow Park in Tauranga where Western Bay Council was definitely threatening to pull the plug. They felt that Tauranga was trying to run the whole show,” Cronin says.

“All through this time, Stuart Crosby [Tauranga], Norm Burning [Western Bay] and Athole Herbert [Regional Council] were pivotal councillors in keeping things on track,” says Cronin.

Part of Weld’s mistrust was about the financing of the strategic growth study. It is well recorded previously in this document that Western Bay was reluctant to contribute financially to the strategy.

Weld continued to be suspect. He believed Tauranga’s insistence that Western Bay contribute was motivated by Tauranga’s desire to ultimately bring about amalgamation. Finally Weld was won over by the rest of the working party team. The “bogey” of amalgamation was put to rest, funding issues were resolved and Western Bay reaffirmed its commitment to SmartGrowth. The strategy moved forward again.

The underlying glue that held the ship together at this dicey time was the long-time relationship between individuals – namely Cronin and Weld. These two individuals had known each other on many levels for a long time. They were both political creatures, both had served on local politics for years in their respective districts and, outside the political arena, their personal lives had merged across professional boundaries for 25 years. So when the waters roughed up, this underlying trust proved the link that kept the SmartGrowth ship afloat.

The importance of trust, confidence and mutual respect cannot be underestimated in the story of SmartGrowth.

## **Tangata whenua help turn SmartGrowth wheel**

Behind the political machinations that led to the formation of SmartGrowth, Maori in the western Bay were keeping a keen eye on developments and were determined not be sidelined.

Maori knew that by virtue of their significant land asset, they held an extremely powerful tool to gain recognition and potential political influence in the region.



They were the largest single landholder in the western Bay with ownership of vast tracts of land either under general title or in multiple-ownership. Much of this land was horticultural (mainly kiwifruit), so it was also an economic asset to the region.

Today (2007), of the 20,000 properties in the western Bay, 779 are under multiple-ownership. These 779 properties total 16,579 hectares (7.7%) of 212,000 hectares that comprise the total western Bay area.

Additional to these properties under multiple ownership is general land owned by Maori.

Experience had taught local Maori the importance of gaining a level of political representation on the territorial authorities.

In the mid-90s the Western Bay District Council showed a measure of enlightenment by forming the Maori Forum – a political voice for tangata whenua within the Council's committee structure, chaired by mayor Maureen Anderson.

The introduction of the Resource Management Act (RMA) in 1991 already had entrenched tangata whenua interests in legislation by giving local authorities a statutory obligation to include consideration of Maori in local government policies and to take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. (RMA Section 6,7 and 8)



*Alf McCausland*

Alf McCausland – current Forum member – recalls that the relationship between tangata whenua and the Western Bay District Council was particularly encouraged and fostered by councillors Graeme Weld, Norm Bruning and Sam Dunlop.

Housing issues were of paramount concern to western Bay Maori in the 1990s, particularly in relation to the use of Maori multiple-owned land in marae zones. Alf and his late wife Margaret were hugely influential in starting the process of getting housing policies discussed around the council table and at central Government level – and the Maori Forum (of which Tauranga City Council had no equivalent at the time) was critical to that progress.

“Tangata whenua’s participation in SmartGrowth today began through that Maori Forum,” says Alf. “Graeme Weld and Norm Bruning were part of the original SmartGrowth team and they were also part of the Maori Forum committee. Graeme was a great advocate for Maori being part of SmartGrowth. Through his perseverance and nudging at the SmartGrowth committee, we were actually given a place.

“It was identified early by the original SmartGrowth team that tangata whenua needed to be involved at some point. We had already gained a voice through the Maori Forum and that began the process of how we would be involved in SmartGrowth, who would represent us and how would we be paid.”

In the late 1990s, as Maori made their political presence felt more profoundly, the then Tauranga City Councillor Stuart Crosby, Western Bay Mayor Maureen Anderson, Tauranga Mayor Noel Pope and Environment Bay of Plenty chairman John Keaney were all advocates for Maori to have a voice in future regional development.

At the same time, Tauranga City Council took the lead from Western Bay and formed an equivalent to the Maori Forum – the Tangata Whenua Collective.

The combined voice of the Maori Forum and the Tangata Whenua Collective then led to the establishment of the Combined Tangata Whenua Collective which is now the formal channel through which Maori from the Western Bay and Tauranga sub-regions have input into SmartGrowth policy and implementation.

By 1999 Maori had become far cleverer at negotiating politically with their local councils and they had gained the ear and the respect of local politicians. So they were in a perfect position to become valued contributors to the SmartGrowth vision.

Their inclusion began from the start with representation on the joint sub-regional growth strategy committee – formed in 2000 as the forerunner to SmartGrowth.

However the proposed inclusion of Maori was not without debate. One member of that joint committee, Western Bay Councillor Geoff Harper, resigned because he objected to the inclusion of Maori in the decision making of the committee.

The Bay of Plenty Times (6 October 2000) reported Councillor Harper as saying in his letter of resignation to acting chairman John Keaney:

“... the added dimension of tangata whenua’s proposed participation and the added delays it foreshadows, makes me wary of wasting my valuable time...”

Fortunately Councillor Harper was alone in his protestations.

When SmartGrowth was launched in 2004 under the guidance of project manager Ken Tremaine, acknowledgment of Maori input into the region's vision was further highlighted through the appointment of a tangata whenua adviser (Vaughan Payne), who was responsible for liaising with Tremaine to facilitate effective participation by Maori.

The original tangata whenua political representatives on SmartGrowth in 2004 were: Maru Tapsell (Western Bay); Te Ruruanga Te Keeti (Tauranga City Council), Puhirake Ihaka (Tauranga City Council), Anthony Fisher (Tauranga City Council), Riko Ahomiro (Western Bay) and Alf McCausland (Western Bay).

SmartGrowth – translated as Tu Pakari ai Tatou (Stand up and be counted) – today is facilitated jointly by tangata whenua advisers, Te Pio Kawe and Antoine Coffin.

SmartGrowth's political representatives are: Maru Tapsell, Puhirake Ihaka and Hemi Rolleston. Alf McCausland is an alternate member.

As the wider Maori community has seen the relationship between tangata whenua and the councils, through SmartGrowth, filter through to changes in the regional plans and council district plans, the mana of tangata whenua's participation has increased greatly, says Alf McCausland.

“The people out there see Maori taking part, they hear us having a voice and being heard – the impact on Maoridom in the region is huge.

“Our presence on SmartGrowth and in its implementation will ensure that those issues and processes we identified as important to Maori will be carried out – we not only have input to council decisions, but we will monitor their progress.

“We need to be alert and smart to ensure that Maori issues do not get left behind.”

## **Political milestone**

When the vision for SmartGrowth was first publicly aired in Tauranga on 27 September 2001, Ken Tremaine said it marked a milestone in the history of the three councils and tangata whenua. It was, he said, the first time they

had all gathered around the table in a joint committee partnership with a consensus approach and a common vision. [\*9]

When Prime Minister Helen Clark officially launched SmartGrowth three years later, she told the council-iwi partnership: “You have taken the initiative on managing growth to get the very best out of it – we can now think about how it can sit alongside central government strategies.”

## Postscript

As SmartGrowth moves in to the implementation phase under the leadership of Weld, Crosby and Cronin, collaboration and partnership continue as the essential drivers. Since the initial work began on SmartGrowth, this collaboration and communication have helped significant gains to be made in paving the way for the sub-region’s development over the next 50 years.

Those gains have included:

- Detailed planning for future urban and commercial land zoning
- Infrastructure planning, particularly transportation roading corridors in the east, south, north and west of the region and a marine corridor for shipping lanes [Port], commercial fishing, marine farming and recreational fishing
- Requirements for education, health, recreation and social amenities.
- Significant buy-in from Central Government: Government approval of tolling the \$244 million Harbour Link project; Crown grant of \$150 million for other Western Bay transportation projects.

Achieving political buy-in from central Government has been a huge win for SmartGrowth.

Right from its launch, the SmartGrowth working party has engaged the Government in discussions on the region’s growth and the need for resourcing infrastructure and the social, health, housing and education needs of the region.

Developing partnerships with ministers and senior staff of the Crown has been ongoing behind the scenes. Central to that process has been the input of Margaret Wilson MP who has always taken a deep and personal interest in SmartGrowth’s aims.



*Margaret Wilson MP*

Becoming involved with SmartGrowth soon after it was launched, Ms Wilson says the level of professionalism and competency of the political representatives and administrative officials impressed her. Ms Wilson believes it is important for central and local government to develop a collaborative approach to managing growth because, to address the big issues such as infrastructure, decisions on funding and regulatory requirements must come from both central and local government.

“It seemed to me to be a rational approach to help the region in a practical way,” Ms Wilson says.

“My colleagues were prepared to give time to listen to the region’s local government representatives’ plan for the region. It was decided on a point of contact in the Minister of Finance’s [Michael Cullen] office and the relationship developed from there.

“That co-operating on a regional or cross-council level leads to better decision making. It can save time, money and resources – but it does take commitment to make the model work.”

As a model from which other regions in New Zealand can learn, Ms Wilson said SmartGrowth offers a strong blueprint for the collaboration that can be formed between local and central government.

“It is important that central government listens to the regions. Central government’s role is to ensure the needs of the regions are included in central government planning, regulatory arrangements and budgets.

“Central government must balance many interests, but if the region’s interests are not clearly articulated, then they are unlikely to be accommodated.”

Aimed at creating a region where ‘work, live and play’ are the planning planks, the range of planning is vast, requiring input, resources and co-operation from key movers and shakers in local and central government, non-government organisations, urban and environmental planning and in the social, education, health and tourism sectors.

The early leaders of the region [prior to SmartGrowth] learned the hard way that no one goes anywhere alone, but once mistrust was replaced with collaboration, progress was made. Ken Tremaine stresses that fostering those hard-won political relationships is vital as SmartGrowth moves forward.

“The elected member contribution can not be underestimated. The staff of the respective councils [Tauranga and Western Bay] had carried the

torch for an integrated cross-organisational growth management strategy for many years, waiting for sufficient governance trust and leadership to emerge. Once councillors began to listen to each other's issues, they realised they had common problems – and the process took off."

Looking ahead, says Tremaine, effective community governance and leaderships is one of the most critical growth management success factors. "It is possible to have the most technically elegant solutions to growth management issues, but if they do not engage the hearts and minds of elected representatives, they will go nowhere."



*Tremaine: Effective political governance critical to SmartGrowth success.*

## Bibliography

- \*1 [Bay of Plenty Times editorial, August 19, 1997]
- \*2 [BOPT 28 May 1998]
- \*3 [BOPT, 13 February, 1998]
- \*4 [BOPT 16 March 1999]
- \*5 [BOPT 17 March 1999]
- \*6,7 [BOPT 26 September 1998; 3 October 1998]
- \*8 [BOPT 17 June 1999]
- \*9 [BOPT 27 September 2001]
- \*10 [BOPT 13 February 1998]
- \*11 [BOPT 17 June 1999]
- \*12 [BOPT 24 August 2001]

## **Headlining the history of growth in Tauranga and Western Bay**

History of the political machinations of sub-regional growth pains encapsulated in Bay of Plenty Times headlines from 1997-2001

- 22 April 1997: Councils join forces to study urban plan [bid for Western Bay and Tauranga councils to work together in the interests of greater Western Bay]
- 16 August 1997: Bay growth on agenda
- 19 August 1997: Growth meeting is 10 years too late ... “horse has bolted ...” [Editorial]
- 26 August 1997: Suburbia creeping up on rural Bethlehem
- 22 November 1997: Freeze halts rural subdivision [Fields for the Future – Western Bay Council’s halt to subdivision on unsealed roads announced and implemented immediately]
- 24 November 1997: Tauranga growth amazes economist
- 25 November 1997: Merger may be complete for 2001 poll [Amalgamation pushed by Tauranga City as political solution to future of Western Bay and Tauranga]
- 27 January 1998: Tauranga welcomes user-pays roads
- 12 February 1998: United local body viability debated [Amalgamation concept again floated]
- 13 February 1998: Regional council opposed to merger
- 13 February 1998: Subdivision plan divides council [Fields for Future plan, Western Bay District Council].
- 12 March 1998: Roading partnership hailed [Strategic roading partnership Access agreed to by Western Bay and Tauranga]
- 6 March 1998: Mayors plan meeting on area’s future
- 2 April 1998: City roads most congested



- 3 April 1998: Building growth strong despite planning rules [Western Bay building consents up 10% and subdivision consents up 25% from 1997]
- 3 April 1998: Building growth strong despite planning rules
- 7 April 1998: Te Puke plans for housing boom
- 11 April 1998: Councils urged to pull together
- 22 May 1998: Lobby group presents alternative strategy
- 28 May 1998: Environment BOP supports Fields scheme
- 15 June 1998: Fast track as Omokoroa set to soar
- 23 July 1998: Subdivision returns to dusty roads
- 4 August 1998: “Prima donna” Pope shakes confidence
- 6 August 1998: Mayors at odds over news release
- 20 August 1998: Call for mayors’ united front on political future study
- 5 September 1998: Amalgamation meeting canned
- 24 September 1998: Tauranga drops idea for council merger
- 26 September 1998: Wither Tauranga? [Blueprint of Strategic Directions – Tauranga City’s vision for the city’s future]
- 28 September 1998: Anderson pleased at Tauranga backdown
- 29 September 1998: Regional councillors ill-informed, says Crosby
- 28 September 1998: Anderson pleased at Tauranga backdown [Western Bay’s reaction to Tauranga dropping idea of amalgamation]
- 3 October 1998: Where to from here?
- 3 October 1998: God defend us from becoming a mini-Auckland [Cr Mary Dillon Tauranga City]
- 9 December 1998: Roading reform helps Tauranga
- 28 January 1999: Peninsula [Omokoroa] blueprint prepared
- 9 March 1999: Western Bay under fire over planning
- 16 March 1999: Council’s wild west tactics disappoint
- 17 March 1999: Wild West rounded-up ... ‘Yeehaa!’

- 18 March 1999: 'Bruising' Fields for Future saga ends
- 20 March 1999: Boards have had "gutsful" [Community Boards tire of infighting in Western Bay council]
- 31 March 1999: Fields for Future appeals in court
- 3 April 1999: 20 years' supply of subdivisions in Bay
- 14 April 1999: Rising population forces eco-crisis alert
- 18 May 1999: More gagging accusations expected at Western Bay council meeting
- 27 May 1999: Omokoroa plan counts on population growth
- 17 June 1999: Western Bay gives \$50,000 to plan future
- 22 June 1999: Developers want Fields' plan changes suspended
- 2 July 1999: Call for group to stand up for property rights
- 5 August 1999: Western Bay growth analysis to aid planning
- 9 September 1999: Papamoa first choice for industry area
- 25 March 2000: Growth strategy "roadblocked" [Pope accuses Western Bay of stalling growth strategy]
- 5 April 2000: Fields for Future policy under review
- 8 April 2000: Savage rates increase as values rise
- 2 May 2000: Debt set to skyrocket [Western Bay Council faces \$75.5 million debt to face demands of growth]
- 27 June 2000: Dust-choked residents make appeal
- 27 June 2000: Maketu people want new sewerage options
- 2 August 2000: Omokoroa faces big growth phase
- 4 August 2000: Push for urgent rural subdivision review
- 2 September 2000: Joint bid to predict 50 years of growth [Bureta Park meeting of three councils – initiated SmartGrowth idea]
- 11 September 2000: Western Bay growth forecast confirmed
- 27 September 2000: Growth is alarming [Concern over Tauranga city infill]
- 1 November 2000: Council to discuss growth plans

- 4 November 2000: Mini city planned for Papamoa East
- 9 November 2000: Omokoroa poll rejects growth
- 14 November 2000: Bethlehem land bought for sports and reserves
- 13 January 2001: Maketu “at risk” from growth
- 25 August 2001: “Courage and guts” got mayor through [Anderson after losing mayoral election to Graeme Weld]
- 25 September 2001: “Wild West” aims to have fewer shootouts
- 26 September 2001: Salvos fired from opposite Western Bay council camps
- 26 September 2001: Growing pains: the danger ahead [warning from Ken Tremaine at SmartGrowth draft vision launch]
- 27 September 2001: Problems ahead as Bay grows [Prediction by Professor Richard Bedford, Waikato University, analyst of Bay demographics, addressing SmartGrowth draft vision]
- 25 May 2004: PM praises 50-year plan [Helen Clark at SmartGrowth official launch]



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