



## SmartGrowth Newsletter #27, September 2008

### More drivers ditch their cars and catch the bus

The rising price of petrol is changing people's travel habits in Tauranga with an increase in the number of people, who own cars, choosing to travel by bus instead.

The trends were revealed in a survey of 1,000 bus users and non-users by Environment Bay of Plenty, which funds the bus services in the Bay of Plenty.

Tauranga bus services are excellent or very good value for money, according to around 90 per cent of bus passengers surveyed.

- About two thirds of passengers are travelling by bus up to three times a week and there is an increase of up to 12% in the number of passengers commuting to work by bus.
- About half of the passengers surveyed owned a car and were choosing to travel by bus instead.
- A fifth of passengers travel by bus because it is good value for money and cheaper than driving.

Regional Land Transport Committee Chairman Andrew von Dadelszen was pleased to see that people were choosing to use the bus rather than their own cars.

"We know that more Bay of Plenty residents are using the buses more often and the survey results show that those people are pleased with the service. Our next goal is to find ways to encourage residents to get out of their cars and travel by bus more than three times a week," said Mr von Dadelszen.

More than 80 per cent of bus passengers in Tauranga are satisfied with bus services.

Environment Bay of Plenty, which funds the bus services, is aware that the increase in bus use is putting a strain on our current bus service, particularly in Tauranga. Regional council staff are working closely with Tauranga City Council on a solution to make sure people can continue to get to work and school by bus safely and comfortably.

Welcome to SmartGrowth News,

A healthy debate is continuing in the media about transport particularly tolls and walking or cycling options. Here in the western Bay of Plenty and Tauranga transport is a hot issue. Many of us enjoy living on peninsulas because of the water views, however, this means there are lots of traffic bottlenecks which we all have to pass to get to work or drop the kids off. Getting around our area is challenging and will continue to be so with the growth predicted, particularly if we all travel by car.

SmartGrowth is continuing to work with local councils and the regional council as well as central government to ensure the growth in population is matched by increased transport infrastructure. This includes roads like the Tauranga Eastern Motorway from Bay Park to Papamoa or increased buses serving key areas of residential growth.

Creating a city that is easy to get around is essential for our economy. It's good to see from the latest figures from the economic development agency Priority One that our economy here in the Bay is thriving. SmartGrowth is working to ensure that our economy continues to flourish by planning for education and training opportunities to match our population and business growth.

You can read about some of our SmartGrowth successes and what's in store for the Western Bay and Tauranga in this newsletter.

**Bill Wasley**  
**SmartGrowth Independent**  
**Chairman**

## The Bay is booming

Tauranga and the western Bay of Plenty continue to flourish economically at a far greater rate than the national average.

Tauranga was judged the best performing economy in 2007 in a study by economic research firm BERL. Local councils were assessed on a number of factors including growth in the number of businesses, employment and population.

Western Bay of Plenty leapt up the table from forty third place in 2006 to seventh last year.

The Quality of Life Survey, released in late 2007, found that:

- Tauranga's population grew by 14.4% in the last five years. This was the second highest rate of the 12 cities assessed.
- Tauranga topped the board for internal migration, gaining 5,634 people between 2001 and 2006.
- Over the five years ending March 2006, Tauranga's economy grew by an average of 4.3% per annum.
- Tauranga's growth rate of business was higher than the New Zealand average, growing 36% from 2002 to 2006.
- Tauranga had the highest rate of growth in new jobs between 2001 and 2006 at 37.2%.
- The Bay of Plenty had the greatest regional decline in the unemployment rate, falling from 6.3% to 4% between 2003 and 2006.

Didn't we do well.

### What is SmartEconomy doing for me as a resident or business owner?

- Supporting key industries with tertiary education, research and development
- Developing export-focussed business parks
- Making it easier for export business to grow
- Conserving our vibrant city centre
- Supporting the development of essential infrastructure, including roads and power supply.

## Where's our money for roads?

The debate over the Bay of Plenty's funding for new or improved roads, continues to be a hot topic for Smartgrowth.

Mayor Stuart Crosby, of Tauranga City Council, said the Bay of Plenty needs to find a short fall of \$300 million for the first ten years to complete our transportation projects, followed by another estimated \$500 million in the next ten years to complete the roads planned for the region in order to serve our growing population.

"As a region we are working together to fund these projects with a variety of funding tools from within the region. But still there is a significant shortfall that can only be filled by central government. The delays in upgrading our transport networks within the region have a large economic and social cost to our communities which is unacceptable," said Mayor Stuart.

"There is no new money going into fund, it's being adjusted with inflation. There is a short technical term for this – it's called being shafted. The more we seem to help ourselves here in the Bay of Plenty, the more we seem to be punished financially," added Mayor Stuart.



## Take a mate to work

Tauranga City Council has launched its new car share website in August in a bid to reduce congestion on our roads.

The new website at [www.carsharebop.co.nz](http://www.carsharebop.co.nz) allows commuters who want to share a ride around the city to be matched with someone going in the same direction at about the same time. Drivers and riders make contact with each other themselves.

The website is designed to encourage more commuters to ride together into the city, or to other parts of the city, cutting costs for both and easing traffic congestion.

Car sharers register on the website with basic details of first names, where they want to travel and when they want to go, and what days of the week they need to travel. They can also include any preferences for their car-mates, such as non-smoker, male or female or other factors.

Tauranga City Council is working on developing a portal for larger organisations so that staff can arrange to travel only with other staff from the same organisation.

## Smartgrowth Snippets

### Marine park update

Economic development agency Priority One is working on a new business project called Harbour Central. This could see the creation of a marine precinct, which would be a dedicated area for marine businesses. This could include sophisticated haul-out and marine refit operations, with the potential to create over 500 new jobs and \$100 million in revenue.

The first stage in this project involves working on developing the feasibility study and business case. This should start in October, depending on funding for the project, and Priority One will be seeking investment funding in the first part of 2009.

### Marine research

The University of Waikato is investigating the potential for setting up a marine research institute in Tauranga in partnership with internationally recognised scientists. The marine institute would build on Waikato's established international recognition in coastal marine science, oceanography and engineering.



## More courses in Tauranga

The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and the University of Waikato have announced that they will be working more closely together to deliver extra tertiary and research programmes from 2009. University students and staff will move to share the polytechnic's two current sites catering to an extra 430 full-time students. This could increase to almost 1,000 students by 2012.

## Food park on the menu

Economic development agency Priority One is working on an idea to develop a food processing, horticulture and nutraceuticals manufacturing park. The focus would be on export-based businesses. The park could also include an innovation centre delivering research and development. Priority One is currently looking at locating this in Te Puke.

## Clinical school coming to Bay

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board and University of Waikato are working together to set up a clinical school in the Bay of Plenty. With campuses in Tauranga and Whakatane, students will be able to study the practical aspects of midwifery, psychology, physiotherapy, social work and other health-related disciplines. The clinical school will be crucial for attracting high quality health professionals. The workforce in the health sector is expected to increase by 25% in the next decade to keep up with demand.

## Tangata Whenua Liaison

The Combined Tangata Whenua Forum provides a regional forum for hapu, Iwi and Maori to raise implementation issues. The forum meets roughly every two months before the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee meetings to offer input into agenda items. Their role is to work with the SmartGrowth Implementation Committee (a committee of the SmartGrowth leaders) and use the collective knowledge of the Combined Tangata Whenua Forum to come up with solutions to population growth issues in Tauranga and the Western Bay.

The members of the forum also provide information to help SmartGrowth leaders to make good decisions for the whole community.



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