Tairāwhiti Destination Management Plan

A Land of Stories and Storytellers

Hurihia to kanohi ki te ra, kia taka to atarangi ki muri i a koe

Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.

Our Tohu

Tīwhana

The top section refers to the rays of Tamanuiterā acknowledging the deep connection we have as the 1st people to see the new dawn, also the rich korero we hold that ties us back to the land we sit on today. The koru and kape rua on each side speak to the pockets of knowledge held within each hapu and whanau of Te Tairāwhiti. The four Mangopare represent each of the four iwi that make up Te Tairāwhiti. Ngati Porou, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Rongowhakaata, Ngai Tāmanuhiri. With the two top koru expressing and acknowledging the dreams and aspirations of the next generation.

Ara Moana

The bottom section speaks to our relationship with Tangaroa and Hine Moana. Our path to the sea, and the path our tipuna took to arrive here. These patterns are also representative of the strength of our wahine here on the east coast, based on traditional weaving patterns ara moana talks about the interweaving of our rich korero, whakapapa and matauranga that emanate for our home here in Te Tairāwhiti.

Tohu Design
MAIA GIBBS ARTS

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Destination Tairāwhiti

Hurihia to kanohi ki te ra, kia taka to atarangi ki muri i a koe. Turn your face to the sun and the shadows fall behind you.

Tairāwhiti, the first place in the world to feel the sun on the dawn of a new day, is a beautiful and treasured slice of Aotearoa. From sacred mountains steeped in cultural heritage, to the spectacular beauty of the Pacific Ocean coastline, there are stunning areas of natural beauty around every corner.

Tairāwhiti is full of people who came for a holiday and stayed for the lifestyle. It offers a laid back, easy pace that allows visitors to take a moment and reflect on the simple pleasures of life. A visit to Tairāwhiti is purposeful, with the clear intention of travelling to the region to experience all it has to offer.

The region enjoys a great climate with loads of sunshine hours and opportunities for visitors to enjoy outdoor activities in stunning natural environments. Combined with the welcoming nature of the community, you have a visitor experience and destination that is second to none.

Tairāwhiti is a land of stories and storytellers, just waiting for visitors to experience the East Coast manaakitanga and build lasting relationships with the whenua and people.

📷 Maunga Hikurangi
EPIC TRAILS

A Destination Management Approach

The Government's Destination Management Guidelines consider the broader trends and challenges faced by the tourism industry. The guidelines acknowledge that tourism, both domestically and globally, has experienced substantial growth over time, leading to concerns about its sustainability and impact on destinations.

Visitors	Iwi/Hapu	Government	Local Residents	Tourism Industry	Businesses

Destination - Te Tairāwhiti

The primary focus on increasing visitor numbers and spending in many regions has led to some destinations experiencing unsustainable growth, resulting negative effects on the environment, culture, and communities. Destination management has emerged as a critical strategy to address these issues and ensure that tourism reflects the aspirations of New Zealanders while maximising benefits and minimising adverse impacts.

In this context, Tairāwhiti is comparatively remote, and the region's isolation presents an opportunity to apply destination management practices that consider national priorities. Through careful management of tourism growth, the region can achieve a balance between economic development, cultural preservation, social wellbeing, and environmental protection.

This approach aligns with national aspirations for sustainable development, where regenerative tourism enhances the overall wellbeing of communities while maintaining the country's unique natural and cultural assets.

Post COVID and the impacts of global travel disruptions, there is a heightened need to reevaluate destination management strategies. The Government recognises the importance of bold and innovative initiatives that align tourism with their broader sustainable development goals. By fostering economic opportunities and responsible tourism practices, the national context of destination management aims to create a resilient and thriving tourism industry that benefits local communities and visitors alike. This approach seeks to ensure that tourism contributes positively to New Zealand's overall wellbeing for generations to come.
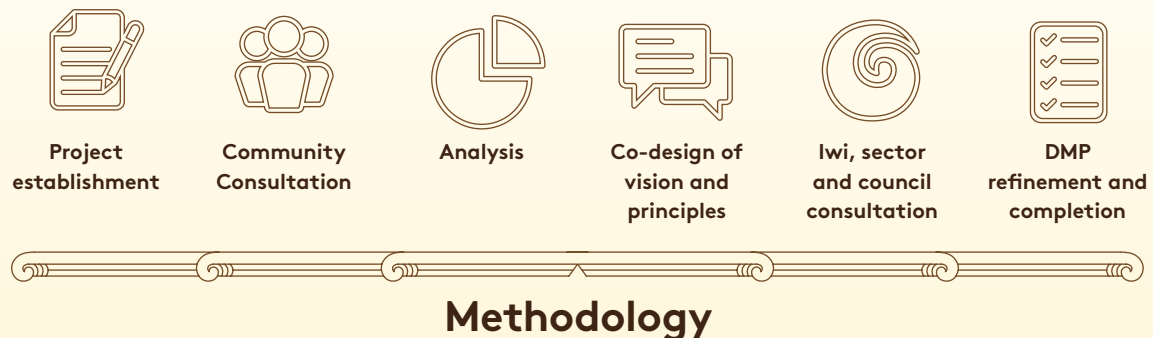
Engagement Process

A crucial aspect of the destination management process involves understanding and incorporating the future aspirations of the residents, workers, visitors, and those engaged in the region. The priorities in this plan were shaped by community engagement and will serve as a roadmap to achieve their aspirations.

The initial engagement phase was integral to achieving local support for the DMP. Consultation with a broad range of stakeholders - including mana whenua, residents, tourism operators, the wider business community, and Government - led to a comprehensive understanding of the tourism landscape and opportunities to shape future planning and development.

The engagement involved a range of methods. Key stakeholders actively participated in meetings, providing valuable insights. Smaller meetings were held with various interest groups to understand opportunities across sectors, while tourism aspirations from iwi flight plans laid a foundation for ongoing discussions.

The Social Pinpoint online platform enabled community input through a virtual ideas wall, interactive mapping, and forums. Workshops with stakeholders explored unique selling points, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. They discussed governance, partnerships, funding, diversification, and potential game-changing projects.

This engagement set the stage for a community driven DMP with regional aspirations for a sustainable and regenerative tourism destination.

Project establishment	Community Consultation	Analysis	Co-design of vision and principles	Iwi, sector and council consultation	DMP refinement and completion

Methodology

The Tairāwhiti DMP engagement process encountered challenges due to the impact of COVID. Despite these obstacles, a series of talks and online sessions were held throughout the region, attracting participants from various segments of the community.

Uniting Aspirations for Tairāwhiti's Future

While some aspirations were specific to communities, some came up time and time again that spoke to a shared regional view.

Strengthening Tairāwhiti Bonds

A recurring aspiration was the desire for whānau to return home to Tairāwhiti. To achieve this, there needs to be opportunities for sustainable employment or training, affordable housing, and amenities for everyone in the family.

Timeless Tairāwhiti Treasures

The natural attractions of Tairāwhiti have been enjoyed by locals and enticed visitors for generations. For the people of Tairāwhiti, the coastline and surf breaks, the rivers and the land are at the heart of it being a great place to live and a desirable place to visit. Throughout consultation, there was a strong view that tourism should support community and the environment to thrive. It should not cause harm. For Māori, there is a strong aspiration to establish effective mechanisms and opportunities that unlock the potential of Māori-owned land, supporting and empowering Māori communities in the region.

Fostering Wellbeing & Connections

Consultation highlighted a strong aspiration for the spiritual wellbeing of whānau, rangatahi and the wider community. There is a need for knowledge to be passed on, and transferred to rangatahi to ensure that they can never lose their way, and that there is a continued connection for them with who they are and where they are from.

Physical representations of traditions and knowledge should be visible throughout the region to strengthen connections among locals and highlight to visitors the spiritual and cultural significance of Tairāwhiti. To ensure that there is always a place or tether for rangatahi who whakapapa back to Tairāwhiti to connect to, communities expressed a need to ensure that marae and local whanau, hapū and iwi have strong succession plans for continuity into the future.

Sustaining Cultural Heritage

The community would like to see the tourism sector grow and shared the view that growth would provide holistic benefits for Tairāwhiti: socially, economically, culturally, and spiritually. However, growth or future projects and initiatives should not negatively impact the people of Tairāwhiti and their way of life. The community enjoys a wide range of recreation, creative and cultural activities they would like to see protected for future generations. They also feel a sense of freedom to express their art, histories, heritage, and traditions and would like this aspect to be preserved.

Destination Positioning

Secluded from the rest of the North Island, Tairāwhiti is a destination where visitors choose to make the journey to explore.

To entice visitors to venture off the beaten path, the destination needs to position itself as one-of-a-kind and captivating. Following consultation, four prominent themes emerged that guide destination positioning.

Pillar

①

Te Ao Māori Tapestry

Delve into the vibrant threads of Māori heritage and culture in Tairāwhiti, where authentic experiences and traditions intertwine. Embrace the region's warmth as the first to greet the dawn, a symbolic connection to the land's timeless spirit.

②

Nature's Playground Unleashed

Experience the untouched beauty of Tairāwhiti, where pristine coastlines, lush native forests, world-class surf breaks and cycle trails beckon adventurers to immerse themselves in nature's wonders.

③

Bountiful Harvest

Savour the delights of Tairāwhiti, whether it's the sampling the beautiful produce grown from the land, artisan treats from the farmers markets or freshly-caught kaimoana served at local restaurants, you'll be treated to a culinary journey.

④

Aroha-Fuelled Connections

Experience the genuine warmth and community spirit of Tairāwhiti, where visitors are embraced as whānau. Engage in heartwarming stories, witness local artistry, be welcomed with the hospitality that leaves lasting connections.

Embracing Opportunities

Infrastructural Advancements

The region's infrastructure offers expansion opportunities, notably State Highway 35. Forestry and weather challenges also enable community resilience. Campervan popularity signals potential need to improve waste management. Adapting to camping regulations can foster innovation. Ongoing infrastructure programs, led by Gisborne District Council, reflect their commitment to bettering connectivity, accessibility, and amenities. While not extensively outlined in the DMP, these initiatives highlight proactive efforts to enhance the region's appeal and improve the visitor experience.

Enhanced Public Transport

The limited public transportation options in the coastal and inland areas offer opportunities for expansion. While a basic passenger and courier service exists along State Highway 35, there is room to develop a more immersive tourism-focused transport service. Travel arrangements between Gisborne and Ōpōtiki can be facilitated through the local isite, opening doors for convenient and enjoyable exploration.

Accommodation Development

The limited availability of commercial accommodations in Gisborne signifies an opportunity for growth and development within the local tourism landscape. The gap presents a chance to attract investment and innovation in the hospitality sector, creating diverse stay options. There's also opportunity to extend this growth regionally. By promoting and supporting the establishment of lodging near popular tourist destinations, the region can tap into its full tourism potential. This expansion enhances visitor experiences, stimulates local economies, and contributes to a dynamic tourism industry.

Climate Change Resilience

The region's vulnerability to climate change provides a chance to proactively address potential impacts. By investing in resilient coastal infrastructure and adapting roads to changing sea levels, the region can ensure continued access to key destinations while minimising disruptions to businesses and communities. Such efforts can safeguard the visitor economy and protect natural assets.

Sustainable Environmental Management

Addressing ablution facilities in key visitor areas offers an opportunity to enhance environmental sustainability. Providing adequate facilities and waste management solutions not only benefits the environment but also strengthens the social acceptance of tourism. By integrating long-term waste and environmental management into community plans, the region can create a more appealing and responsible tourism destination.

Seasonality Diversification

The focus on spring and summer tourism presents an opportunity to diversify visitor traffic throughout the year. Encouraging events and activities during the shoulder months can extend the tourism season, providing more consistent opportunities for growth. Overcoming accommodation constraints during peak seasons can be achieved through creative solutions that accommodate organic visitor growth.

Retaining Local Talent

Addressing urban drift and retaining residents after high school can foster a skilled workforce and vibrant community. By creating education, employment, and lifestyle opportunities within the region, Tairāwhiti can retain its young talent and contribute to sustainable development.

Regional Balance

Balancing the benefits of the visitor economy across the region offers an opportunity for equitable growth. Developing paid experiences in coastal and rural areas, along with effective wayfinding, can attract travellers to smaller communities. This will result in a more widespread positive impact on local economies and enhance the overall visitor experience.

Preparedness for Natural Disasters

Given its susceptibility to natural disasters like tsunamis, the region can create opportunities by strengthening emergency response strategies. Incorporating visitor safety measures and communication plans into the region's disaster management can ensure a safer experience for travellers during such events.

Cruise Tourism

Cruise tourism presents an opportunity for Tairāwhiti to boost its local economy and raise its profile as a global tourism destination. Cruise ships can bring thousands of visitors to the region each year, who can spend money on goods and services, create jobs, and support local businesses. Cruise tourism can also help to promote the region's unique attractions to a wider audience, attracting more visitors in the future.

Regenerative Tourism

Regenerative tourism offers a holistic approach to tourism that aims to leave a destination better than it was found. Regenerative tourism practices will enhance the visitor experience by providing opportunities for visitors to learn about and connect with the local culture and environment. It will also improve the sustainability of the tourism industry by reducing its environmental impact and supporting local communities. Tairāwhiti can focus on supporting businesses and communities to adopt regenerative tourism practices and promoting the region as a destination for regenerative tourism.

Success Factors

Connecting Communities and Cultivating Collaboration: Building Tairāwhiti's Sustainable Visitor Economy.

To build and develop the visitor economy in Tairāwhiti, there is a crucial need for greater alignment and engagement between industry, stakeholders, and communities. The success of this plan relies on strong connections and providing engagement opportunities that will align the sector with the aspirations and values of the local communities. The plan aims to address some of these issues and promotes mutually beneficial collaborations across multiple sectors.

Promoting greater alignment and engagement will achieve a positive social license for the visitor economy. While some areas in the region may already enjoy a steady level of social license, there are communities that perceive tourism as potentially problematic. Some are concerned that an influx of tourists could disrupt their values and their way of life. In this context, it is essential to build trust and understanding between the tourism industry and communities. This plan works towards solutions that mitigate negative impacts and enhance the overall social license for tourism.

The visitor economy should not solely be an economic endeavour but also a means of supporting the community's wellbeing on social, cultural, spiritual, and environmental levels. Tourism can uplift communities by providing economic opportunities, preserving cultural heritage, and protecting the natural environment.

By aligning the tourism sector with the visions

Midway Beach
STRIKE PHOTOGRAPHY

and aspirations of the local people, the plan seeks to ensure that tourism development benefits the community at large.

The plan advocates for a collaborative approach involving various sectors working together towards common objectives. Cross-sector collaboration allows for a comprehensive understanding of the region's needs and the identification of solutions that can benefit everyone involved. Engaging stakeholders from different segments of the community has enabled a more holistic perspective, leading to regenerative tourism practices.

By fostering alignment and engagement between industry, stakeholders, and communities, the plan will ensure that tourism becomes a force for positive change.

Stronger Iwi Partnerships

The iwi partners across Tairāwhiti have a significant role in ensuring the vision of this plan can be achieved. At times, the relationship between sector stakeholders and iwi partners can be seen as transactional, or approaches are made after the project has been completed. Iwi, local government, and regional partners can be stronger partners, by working together at local and iwi rohe levels to boost shared prosperity and community wellbeing. Stronger partnerships, transparency and open lines of communication should to be fostered.

While there is a level of connection and partnership shared between iwi and local government, it remains a shared aspiration that this partnership is strengthened. Meaningful consultation and collaboration will result in stronger benefits for the visitor economy and communities. It will also result in better decision-making and lasting solutions for the region.

Te Maro Sculpture - Kaiti Hill
STRIKE PHOTOGRAPHY

East Cape Lighthouse
JORDAN PERRY

Collaborative and Connected Leadership

Collaborative and effective leadership and governance will help ensure that opportunities are maximised, and decisions that affect the entire region are made in consultation with relevant partners. This will also ensure an increased connection, which is a key recommendation to maximise the growth potential of the visitor economy.

The geographical size of Tairāwhiti is significant, and there are many agencies and stakeholders who play important roles in the management, development, and marketing of the destination. Role clarity, collaborative leadership, and greater connection have been identified as a key element to support growth.

Empower People of Tairāwhiti

Valuing the people of Tairāwhiti is integral to achieving the plan's aspirations. From the education sector and the role they play in providing future career pathways, to support programmes for start-up businesses, through to larger scale initiatives for organisations looking to scale up their operations, there are a range of potential sector enablement opportunities that would empower people.

There is a need to grow the number of export ready products available, with sustainable commission structures to appeal to international markets. As the domestic market has traditionally always been strong for Tairāwhiti, there is potential to open the region to international markets through developed export ready experiences.

Given the high number of Māori in the population there would be benefit in ensuring that there is a suite of kaupapa Māori programmes that can assist with iwi development within the tourism sector, and for them to achieve the aspirations articulated within their individual iwi flight plans.

Destination management requires adequate resourcing, both financial and human to achieve success. This should also include a level of focus within local government avenues such as Annual and Long-Term plans.

There is a lack of experiences available for visitors to engage with. There needs to be a focus on this development to give visitors a reason to stay, and the ability to spend more money in Tairāwhiti. While increasing supply will enable growth in the visitor-economy, stakeholders, industry, and iwi need to ensure these experiences are complementary, inviting visitors to stay longer.

There is also a need to ensure current experience assets that support the arts and creative sectors are not lost. This includes live music venues, theatre companies, music clubs, events, cinemas, and galleries. These activities and assets have a dual benefit. Many operate after hours which increases the opportunity to draw revenue into the region and can be packaged with other tourism experiences to develop multi-day itineraries.

Gisborne Waterfront
STRIKE PHOTOGRAPHY

Our Shared Vision for Tairāwhiti

To create a definitive pathway forward for the region, it is necessary to understand where the journey is taking us, essentially what the shared vision is for Tairāwhiti.

The visitor-sector is an enabler for communities within the region, and many have a desire to see the sector grow, offer employment, and deliver compelling reasons for visitors to journey through to the region. There is an expectation that benefits from this growth should be delivered to both the people and the place of Tairāwhiti, and ensure positive impacts socially, culturally, environmentally, economically, and spiritually.

Community sentiment addresses that growth in the sector should not come at the expense of what the people hold most dear. This includes the natural and cultural assets, the ability and freedom to express the culture, arts, heritage and traditions, and the ability to connect with whānau and enable smaller communities to thrive.

Shared Vision

Promote sustainable growth in the visitor economy of Tairāwhiti, enhancing the social, cultural, environmental, economic, and spiritual wellbeing of the community. Preserve and share our unique way of life, fostering a legacy of prosperity and cultural exchange for future generations.

Wainui Beach
STRIKE PHOTOGRAPHY

Aspirations

Facilitate transformative travel experiences, connecting visitors with the region's spiritual essence and cultural heritage.

Foster inclusive tourism for community empowerment and equitable economic opportunities.

Preserve indigenous heritage through respectful engagement and promotion of traditional practices.

Social
Pāpori

Cultural
Ahurea

I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiātea[1]

Spiritual
Wairua

E kore au e ngaro, he kākano ahau i ruia mai i rangiātea

Environmental
Taiao

Economic
Ōhanga

Ensure sustainable management of natural resources and landscapes for future generations.

Build a diversified and resilient economy through regenerative tourism, supporting businesses and a sustainable workforce.

[1] *Like Hawaiki, Rangiātea is seen by Māori as both a physical place and a spiritual realm – the fount of wisdom about the nature of existence.*

Guiding Principles

Growth holds diverse meanings for different individuals, and measuring success varies based on location and social acceptance of tourism.

While the region enjoys a positive social license for tourism, the abundance of culturally and historically significant areas and the expectation of social, cultural, environmental, economic, and spiritual benefits necessitate prudent management of growth. Throughout the planning process, shared principles emerged, guiding strategic priorities:

- **Value our heritage and taonga**
  > ensure the histories and stories shared are factual and authorised to ensure that they are valued.

- **Lead lives that align with our values**
  > ensure that tourism does not negatively impact the people within the region but supports their way of life.

- **Embrace the role of hosts with empowerment for our visitors**
  > uphold manaakitanga, empowering hosts to provide enriching experiences to visitors.

- **Value over volume**
  > develop and manage growth for the sector, attracting higher value visitors to the destination.

- **Genuine people to people interactions**
  > deliver experiences that allow visitors to engage with the natural environment and hear the stories from locals, told their way.

- **Tangible and positive outcomes for communities**
  > provide tangible, visible, and real outcomes for the communities of the region.

Goals

- **Greater alignment and engagement**
  > foster stronger collaboration and engagement among industry, stakeholders, and communities.

- **Promote social acceptance**
  > encourage a favourable social acceptance for the visitor economy in the region.

- **Enhance community benefits**
  > Enhance the visitor economy's potential to generate significant benefits for the community.

- **Champion regenerative tourism practices**
  > support and promote the adoption of regenerative tourism practices by businesses and communities in the region.

Strategic Priorities

Enable Destination Management

① Effective Destination Management Leadership.

② Value-Sharing Stakeholder Relationships.

Support Destination Development

③ Enhance Tairāwhiti Visitor Experiences.

④ Empower Sector Capability & Development.

Protect Destination Assets

⑤ Conserve Natural Assets.

⑥ Preserve our Cultural Assets.

Enhance Destination Marketing

⑦ Build Destination Awareness.

⑧ Align Regional Messaging.

Strategic Priorities

The strategic priorities set a pathway to the shared vision of the plan. The recommendations that fall beneath the priorities are designed to maximise the region's strengths and opportunities, while mitigating and managing the challenges.

Governance over this plan will be held by the Tairāwhiti destination advisory group (TDAG), with the support of Trust Tairāwhiti. The TDAG will play a critical role in the implementation of the plan. The group will set the annual activity plan, allocate lead agencies for each action, monitor, and evaluate the progress of the plan, and ensure that lead and partner agencies are working together effectively. By playing these roles, the group will help to ensure that the DMP is successfully implemented, and that Tairāwhiti achieves its shared vision.

① Enable Destination Management

② Support Destination Development

③ Protect Destination Assets

④ Enhance Destination Marketing

Appendix A:

One Year Plan 2025

Focus Projects

The Advisory Group is focusing on these five projects alongside the Annual Plan to address key priorities. These projects aim to improve urban areas, tourism services, safety, accommodation options, and the airport. By giving special attention to these areas, the group ensures they align with the principles of the Tairāwhiti Destination Management Plan, promoting sustainable development, community involvement, and strategic planning for a thriving future.

①

City Centre Catalyst Initiatives project

This project aims to revitalise the City Centre by enhancing public spaces, improving infrastructure, and promoting local businesses. The goal is to create a vibrant, attractive, and economically thriving urban area.

LEAD: **TT / GDC / Rongowhakaata**

②

isite refurbishment project

This project focuses on upgrading the isite visitor information centre to provide a more welcoming and informative experience for tourists. Enhancements will include modernised facilities, interactive displays, and improved accessibility.

LEAD: **TT**

③

Rail bridge enhancement project

This project focuses on upgrading the isite visitor information centre to provide a more welcoming and informative experience for tourists. Enhancements will include modernised facilities, interactive displays, and improved accessibility.

LEAD: **EPL / TT**

④

Commercial accommodation feasibility

This project assesses the feasibility of developing new commercial accommodation options in the region. It includes market analysis, site evaluations, and financial projections to determine the viability and potential impact of such developments.

LEAD: **TT**

⑤

Airport Precinct Development

The precinct development project aims to enhance the airport's functionality and user experience. The project will expand the carpark to accommodate more vehicles, improve the layout for better navigation, and integrate advanced payment systems. Additionally, the precinct will be modernised with new amenities, retail spaces, and improved pedestrian pathways.

LEAD: **EPL / TT**

Strategic Priority One
Enable Destination Management

To grow the visitor-economy the foundation and leadership structure for the sector must be effective. This includes ensuring there is adequate governance over this plan to prioritise the recommendations and assign to the partners, and stakeholders for implementation.

	LEAD		ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
① **Effective Destination Management Leadership**	TT	Ⓐ	**Enhance visitor-economy governance and management.**	⊘ Increase the number of stakeholders involved in Destination Advisory Group to ensure diverse perspectives. ⊘ Publish quarterly reports on action plan progress to maintain stakeholder trust and confidence.
	TT	Ⓑ	**Resource mobilisation.**	⊘ Build an investment pipeline for future destination infrastructure. ⊘ Identify and pursue funding opportunities from government grants and private sector partnerships. ⊘ Link funding to specific outcomes to ensure accountability and measurable progress.
	TT	Ⓒ	**Provide Governance for Regional Brand Management.**	⊘ Review brand audit findings. ⊘ Define the roles and responsibilities of the advisory group in overseeing regional brand management. ⊘ Designate specific stakeholders responsible for establishing and overseeing the decision-making process for approving brand-related changes and initiatives.
② **Value-sharing Stakeholder Relationships**	TT	Ⓐ	**Team up with neighbouring RTOs for interconnected visitor experiences.**	⊘ Aligned objectives and increased cross-regional tourism with neighbouring RTOs. ⊘ Growth in visitor expenditure and joint storytelling initiatives. ⊘ Demonstrable economic benefits for both regions.
	GDC	Ⓑ	**Advocate for upgrades to State Highway segments within Tairāwhiti.**	⊘ Fewer accidents, shorter travel times, and smoother traffic flow on upgraded State Highway segments. ⊘ Increased tourism arrivals, economic activity, and public transport ridership linked to improved connections.
	EPL	Ⓒ	**Partner with airlines to expand air travel options and affordability.**	⊘ Increased airline and local stakeholder satisfaction with partnership effectiveness. ⊘ Demonstrated impact of affordable air travel on regional tourism growth and community economic wellbeing.
	EPL	Ⓓ	**Enhance airport infrastructure.**	⊘ Implementation of infrastructure upgrades, enhancing passenger experience. ⊘ Stimulate economic growth by creating jobs and attracting more visitors and businesses to the region. ⊘ Partner with mana whenua to ensure the development honours and integrates local cultural values and knowledge, promoting community support and sustainable growth.

Strategic Priority Two
Support Experience Development

There are distinct differences in the offerings between those within Gisborne, and the potential that exists around the coast and townships of Tairāwhiti. There is an identified a lack of experiences within both that, if addressed, would encourage a longer stay and create compelling reasons to visit the region. Increasing supply will enable growth in the visitor economy and opportunities for achieving community aspirations. We must ensure these experiences are complementary and strengthen the unique destination positioning.

	LEAD		ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
③ Enhance Tairāwhiti Visitor Experiences	TT	Ⓐ	Enable aspirations of mana whenua.	⊘ Number of collaborative projects with mana whenua. ⊘ Increased cultural representation in tourism offerings. ⊘ Positive feedback from mana whenua on engagement efforts.
	TT	Ⓑ	Prioritise authentic Tairāwhiti visitor experiences.	⊘ Number of potential product opportunities identified. ⊘ Percentage of opportunities implemented or in progress. ⊘ Inclusion in destination marketing channels.
	TT	Ⓒ	Conduct workshops for local businesses and stakeholders.	⊘ Quarterly tourism specific workshops held informed by industry. ⊘ Feedback from participants on workshop effectiveness. ⊘ Maintain consistent participant numbers.
	TT	Ⓓ	Enhance destination marketing efforts.	⊘ Growth in tourism trade related inquiries, bookings, and conversions. ⊘ Increase in media coverage and mentions across various platforms. ⊘ Measurable return on investment (ROI) from marketing campaigns.
	GDC	Ⓔ	Enable the activation of parks and reserves for more dynamic visitor experiences.	⊘ Greater number of events, concessions and activities in parks and reserves. ⊘ Increase in visitation to parks.
④ Empower Sector Capability & Development	TT	Ⓐ	Advocate on sector workforce development needs.	⊘ Number of relevant educational courses in region. ⊘ Increase in workforce skill levels and qualifications in region.
	TT	Ⓑ	Support innovation and entrepreneurship in the tourism sector.	⊘ Number of new tourism startups and innovations. ⊘ Success stories of supported entrepreneurs. ⊘ Increase in the number of trade-ready products.
	TT	Ⓒ	Encourage participation in Qualmark accreditation programme.	⊘ Growth in the number of businesses starting the accreditation process. ⊘ Enhanced understanding of Qualmark benefits among local businesses. ⊘ Number of businesses maintaining or improving their Qualmark ratings.

Strategic Priority Three
Protect Destination Assets

The protection of natural and cultural assets in Tairāwhiti is an important aspiration shared by its communities. The cultural connections and stories offer unique destination positioning. The desire to ensure natural assets are maintained, enhanced, and protected for future generations is strong. The combination of both provides compelling reasons for visitors to choose Tairāwhiti as a destination.

	LEAD		ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
⑤ **Preserve Natural Assets**	GDC	Ⓐ	**Sustainable land use and partnerships.**	⊘ Integrate environmental considerations into land use planning and development.
				⊘ Encourage collaboration between government, private sector, and non-governmental organisations.
				⊘ Ensure that infrastructure, such as rubbish bins and toilets, is adequate to meet the needs of visitors.
	TT	Ⓑ	**Enhance wayfinding signage that acknowledges significant locations for visitors and communities.**	⊘ Ensure input from local communities for the signage is sought.
				⊘ Reduced instances of disrespectful behaviour and increased visitor awareness.
				⊘ Mana whenua participation in signage design and content.
	GDC	Ⓒ	**Maintain and improve the resilience of key visitor sites**	⊘ Renovation of key public conveniences
				⊘ Improved visitor signage in parks
				⊘ Reopening cyclone-affected parks and reserves
	GDC/TT	Ⓓ	**Undertake a regional destination infrastructure review and develop investment pipeline.**	⊘ Collective agreement on key visitor infrastructure across asset owners and funders.
				⊘ Greater advocacy position for destination advisory group.
⑥ **Protect Cultural Assets**	TT	Ⓐ	**Work with mana whenua to determine the narratives to be shared with visitors.**	⊘ Percentage of integrated mana whenua tourism aspirations.
				⊘ Increased visitor engagement with cultural narratives.
				⊘ Enhanced partnerships and trust between mana whenua and the Regional Tourism Organisation.
	TT	Ⓓ	**Work with māori landowners to understand their aspirations and support their initiatives.**	⊘ Product development alignment with Māori landowner aspirations.
				⊘ Community engagement level.

Strategic Priority Four
Enhance Destination Marketing

There is a lack of awareness about Tairāwhiti among domestic and international visitors. This is not just about the geographic location, but also not knowing what there is to do within the region. To build awareness it is essential there are effective destination marketing campaigns that build on the history, stories and taonga, and highlight the values of Tairāwhiti.

	LEAD		ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
⑦ **Build Destination Awareness**	TT	Ⓐ	Create engaging and authentic content on Tairāwhiti Gisborne marketing channels.	⊘ The regional tourism organisation demonstrates the achievement of strategic objectives. ⊘ Increased social media engagement, follower growth, higher website traffic, and longer visit durations for Tairāwhiti Gisborne. ⊘ Positive mentions and increased visibility of Tairāwhiti Gisborne in media and travel publications.
	TT	Ⓑ	Complete a comprehensive brand audit.	⊘ Achieve a unified brand identity with consistent visuals and messaging adopted across the region. ⊘ Ensure authentic representation true to the region's culture, embraced by local communities. ⊘ Increase awareness and engagement with higher recognition and regional adoption.
	TT/GDC	Ⓒ	Support regional events.	⊘ Events meet legal standards and obtain necessary permits under Compliance with Regulatory and Statutory Requirements. ⊘ Economic impact and visitor metrics indicate increased local economic activity. ⊘ Increase the number of events during shoulder and off-seasons.
	TT	Ⓓ	Develop campaigns that attract visitors to all parts of Tairāwhiti.	⊘ Campaigns effectively engage and attract the intended visitors. ⊘ Authentic representation of the destination. ⊘ Increased visitor numbers to various parts of Tairāwhiti, indicating successful regional dispersal.
⑧ **Align Regional Messaging**	TT	Ⓐ	Develop tools, including digital resources, guidelines, and templates, to align with the regional message.	⊘ Improved operator performance is evidenced by operators reporting increased efficiency and effectiveness in their marketing activities. ⊘ Improved operator performance is evidenced by operators reporting increased efficiency and effectiveness in their marketing activities.
	TT	Ⓑ	Identify appropriate domestic and international partners to expand knowledge of the region.	⊘ Number of successful partnerships. ⊘ Increase in destination awareness. ⊘ Growth in international visitors from joint venture partnerships.

Appendix B:

Relevant national documents, resources, and strategies

Destination Management Guidelines (MBIE)

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/tourism/tourism-projects/destination-management-guidelines/

New Zealand Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy (MBIE)

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/tourism/new-zealand-aotearoa-government-tourism-strategy/

Tourism 2025 & Beyond (TIA)

Tourism Industry Aotearoa

https://www.tia.org.nz/tourism-2025/

DOC Heritage and Visitor Strategy (DOC)

Department of Conservation

https://www.doc.govt.nz/heritage-and-visitor-strategy

Living Standards Framework (The Treasury)

The Treasury New Zealand

https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-living-standards-framework

New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment (TIA

Tourism Industry Aotearoa

https://sustainabletourism.nz/

Tiaki Promise (TNZ)

Tourism New Zealand

https://www.tiakinewzealand.com/en_NZ/

Appendix C:

Relevant regional documents, resources, and strategies

He Rangitapu He Tohu Ora (TT)

Trust Tairāwhiti

https://www.trusttairawhiti.nz/who-we-are/strategic-plan-2029/he-tohu-ora-tairawhiti-wellbeing/

Tairāwhiti Economic Action Plan (RTRO)

Rau Tipu Rau Ora

https://trusttairawhiti.nz/assets/Resources/17-Jan-TEAP-Report-Full-Version-v24-single-pages2.pdf

Tairāwhiti Regional Workforce Plan (MBIE)

Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment

https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/regional-skills-leadership-groups/tairawhiti/regional-workforce-plans/tairawhiti-regional-workforce-plan-2022/

Gisborne District Council Long Term Plan (GDC)

Gisborne District Council

https://www.gdc.govt.nz/council/2021-2031-long-term-plan

Gisborne District Council Township Plans (GDC)

Gisborne District Council

https://www.gdc.govt.nz/council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/township-plans

Tairāwhiti Regional Spatial Plan (GDC)

Gisborne District Council

https://www.gdc.govt.nz/council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/township-plans

Tairāwhiti Recreation (GDC)

Gisborne District Council

https://www.gdc.govt.nz/recreation

Appendix D:

Tairāwhiti Destination Profile

The Tairāwhiti is a region located at the north eastern tip of the North Island of New Zealand. It covers an area of 10,800 square kilometres and the main urban centre in the region is Gisborne.

The Tairāwhiti region is diverse with a wide range of geographical features. The western boundary is formed by the Raukumara Range, a rugged mountain range with peaks of over 1,000 meters. The eastern coast is characterised by sandy beaches, cliffs, and headlands. The interior of the region is a mix of rolling hills and farmland.

Tairāwhiti has a humid climate with warm summers and mild winters. The average annual rainfall is approximately 1,200 millimetres. The region is also prone to cyclones, which can occur during the summer months.

According to Statistics New Zealand, the population of Tairāwhiti as of June 2022 was 49,100. This represents a 1.6% increase from the 2018 Census. The population of Tairāwhiti is relatively young, with a median age of 37.0 years. This is slightly lower than the national median age of 37.4 years. Tairāwhiti has a high proportion of māori people, with 53% of the population identifying as māori. This is significantly higher than the national average of 16.5%. The population of Tairāwhiti is concentrated in the Gisborne urban area, home to approximately 75% of the region's population. The remaining population is spread out across several smaller towns and rural areas.

Access
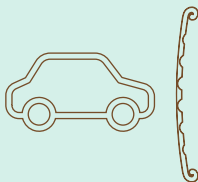
The main drive access into Gisborne is via SH2 from the north and south, or the more scenic SH 35. Due to its geographical isolation, visitors who arrive in Gisborne, have travelled with the intent of visiting the district as there are no other destinations beyond it's borders.
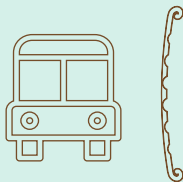
There is a bus terminal in Gisborne with links to Auckland, Manukau, Hamilton, Rotorua, Hastings, Napier, Palmerston North and Wellington. There are no inter-regional bus routes so access from Gisborne city out into the rural areas of the district are limited for those who make their way to the district by bus.
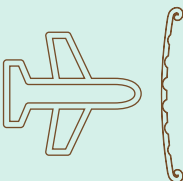
There is an airport within Gisborne which provides air links through to Auckland and Wellington. It has a single terminal with two tarmac gates.

Appendix E:

Tairāwhiti Economic Profile

Economy
Gross domestic product

$2,461m

5.4%
Growth in 2022

Population
Estimated residential population

52,600

1.2%
Growth in 2023

Employment
Filled jobs

24,650

2.9%
Growth in 2022

Māori
Māori employment

11,827

5.9%
Growth in 2022

Productivity
GDP per filled job

$99,842

2.5%
Growth in 2022

Pacific peoples
Pacific peoples employment

822

4.6%
Growth in 2022

Businesses
Number of business units

5,460

3.9%
Growth in 2022

Skills
Highly skilled jobs

9,415

38.2%
Portion of total

Tourism
Tourism filled jobs

1,739

6.2%
Growth in 2022

Living standards
Average household income

$121,193

4.9%
Growth in 2023

Info source: Infometrics Ltd. (2023). Infometrics website. Retrieved from
https://www.infometrics.co.nz/

Regional Economy

According to Infometrics (2023), the Tairāwhiti economy grew by 5.4% in 2022, driven by strong demand for agricultural and forestry products from overseas markets, increased visitor numbers to Tairāwhiti from both domestic and international markets, and investment in new infrastructure and businesses in the region.

Employment in Tairāwhiti also increased by 2.9% in 2022, to 24,650 people. This growth rate was lower than the national average of 3.0%, but it was still a positive sign for the Tairāwhiti economy.

The unemployment rate in Tairāwhiti fell from 6.6% in 2021 to 3.9% in 2022. This decline in unemployment was due to strong job growth in the primary industries, manufacturing, and tourism sectors.

Mean annual earnings in Tairāwhiti were $60,355 in the year to March 2022, which was lower than the national average of $69,585. However, mean earnings in Tairāwhiti increased by 5.1% over the year to March 2022, compared with an increase of 5.6% in New Zealand.

The main industries in Tairāwhiti are primary industries (agriculture, forestry, and fishing), manufacturing (food and beverage processing, wood processing, and metal fabrication), tourism (accommodation, food and beverage services, and recreation and cultural activities), retail, healthcare, and education.

The outlook for the Tairāwhiti economy is positive. GDP growth is expected to continue in the coming years, driven by growth in the primary industries and tourism sectors. Employment growth is also expected to continue, and the unemployment rate is expected to fall further.

There are some challenges facing the Tairāwhiti economy. These include a relatively small and isolated economy, a high proportion of people who are self-employed or unemployed, and a lower-than-average skill level in the workforce.

Visitor Economy

According to Infometrics (2023), the tourism sector employed an average of 1,739 people in Tairāwhiti in 2022, accounting for 7.1% of total employment in the region. This is up from 7.3% in 2000. Employment growth in the tourism sector in Tairāwhiti has averaged 1.1% per annum between 2000 and 2022, compared with an average of 0.2% per annum in New Zealand. In 2022, the tourism sector in Tairāwhiti saw an employment increase of 6.2%, compared to an increase of 2.6% in New Zealand.

The tourism sector contributed $56.3 million towards GDP in Tairāwhiti in 2022, accounting for 2.3% of the region's economic output. This is up from 1.0% in 2000. Growth in the tourism sector in Tairāwhiti has averaged 6.1% since 2000, compared with an average of 5.7% in New Zealand. In 2022, economic output in the Tairāwhiti tourism sector increased by 6.4%, compared with an increase of 4.3% in New Zealand.

Total tourism spending in Tairāwhiti reached $151.8 million in 2022 but was down by 0.1% from the previous year. In contrast, spending increased by 1.4% in New Zealand. International visitors contributed 6.9% to tourism spending in Tairāwhiti in 2022, while domestic visitors contributed 93.1%.

The visitor economy in Tairāwhiti showed signs of recovery in 2022 but remained below pre-pandemic levels. Total guest nights increased by 5% to 327,600, while total tourism expenditure increased by 5% to $84 million.

Domestic tourism continued to be the main driver of the visitor economy, accounting for 85% of guest nights and 75% of tourism expenditure. International tourism showed stronger growth, with guest nights increasing by 15% and expenditure increasing by 10%.

Key markets for Tairāwhiti tourism in 2022 were: Auckland, Wellington, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay, and Australia.

Appendix F:

Social Pinpoint

Listening to the Community

Destination Development section:

"We need more public seating and access to wifi at bays, as well as improved signage."

"We need to start with the building blocks of teaching tourism in schools and making it look like a great employment opportunity."

"We need to encompass all sectors that make up the tourism experience, even those working at gas stations, who become the ambassadors for the region for tourism."

Destination Positioning - What makes us unique? section:

"Our isolation and the need for improved infrastructure."

"The resilience, creativity, humour and easy-going nature of our people."

"The many pearls of our region, such as the surf, the sun, the beautiful rivers, the rockets, and the walking and cycling opportunities."

Enable Destination Management section:

"The need to teach te reo in schools so that young people can know the stories of our region and become the kaitiaki of our treasures."

"The need for a community change in mindset to see tourism as a valuable part of the economy."

"The need for people and funding to get the building blocks of a successful tourism industry in place."

Protect our Natural and Cultural Assets section:

"The need to strike a balance between providing access to natural and cultural assets and protecting them."

" Iwi should lead the discussions around protection of these assets."

"We need to ensure that any commercial activities are sustainable and do not damage the assets."

Kaitiakitanga   Manaakitanga

Tairāwhiti Region
Community

Economic **Sustainable**
Heritage Visitor

Local
Social **Destination**

Tourism
Whānaungatanga

Culture
Environmental Growth

Engagement Experiences
Destination

Management **Collaboration**
Opportunities

Rangatiratanga   Kotahitanga

www.trusttairawhiti.nz