

## Scenario 3: Accelerated land zoning capacity and competitive land market

### At a glance

- This scenario examines an accelerated version of Scenario 2, in which development and infrastructure outpace current population projections, which occurs faster than anticipated and may later slow down.
- Growth occurs at speed and across multiple fronts, with developers leapfrogging into all available areas. Industrial and residential activity expands simultaneously in SL1, Peacocke, Rukuhia, and around the Airport.
- Wet industries are only considered when wastewater services are available after 2040, retail nodes proliferate, and infrastructure struggles to keep pace with the rate and spread of urban development.
- Environmental pressures intensify, with fragmented blue-green networks and risks to biodiversity.
- The centre's approach outlined in the Future Proof Strategy and the Regional Policy Statement is undermined, lacking a clear plan or staging for local and neighbourhood centres. Significant commercial activity at the Airport competes with other centres, suggesting that while the overall centres approach may endure, a strict hierarchy will likely not.
- By 2055, the area is busier and more economically diverse — but also less coordinated and harder to service sustainably.

## Scenario Elements – Key assumptions

Scenario elements	Key assumptions	
	By 2040	By 2055
 <p><b>Anticipated Regulatory Environment and Population Projections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This scenario is most aligned with the upcoming Resource Management reforms in terms of housing targets, live zoning for 30-years of capacity and creating a competitive land market, focusing on enabling housing and industrial land supply and fast-tracking approvals.</li> <li>National policy requires councils to identify and release significant amounts of land for development, often beyond existing long-term growth plans. Structure plans can be prepared, but in this scenario, they are mostly led by developers and are executed at a much smaller scale.</li> <li>With no initial and comprehensive spatial planning for the study area, the first approved have an advantage as they establish the intent and requirements for future servicing in surrounding areas.</li> <li>Population projections here are maintained at a sub-regional scale but are accelerated within the study area. This could be driven by large-scale economic opportunities, possibly through the emergence of large-scale industries, such as the growth of the agritech sector, which may attract significant numbers of workers and their families to the region, or the development of new urban centres linked to new transport corridors could create substantial employment opportunities and draw populations to previously less populated areas.</li> <li>Given the above, there is a risk that other areas within the subregion will experience low or delayed growth.</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Residential / Industrial / Commercial development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Across <b>SL1</b>, both areas previously under fast-track applications and the remaining balance are being delivered ahead of infrastructure sequencing, with residential, commercial, and industrial activities emerging in parallel. The initial SL1 concept plan has been challenging to coordinate, and the piecemeal approach has created land use inefficiencies.</li> <li>There are minimal neighbourhood centres and community facilities – existing facilities are relied on instead.</li> <li>With the accelerated population growth adding pressure on housing demand in the area, <b>Peacocke</b> is developing at pace, with a largely developer-led roll-out resulting in the expected density outlined in its structure plan. Peacocke also includes a larger neighbourhood centre than initially planned for.</li> <li>The <b>area north of Collins Road</b> and <b>SL2</b> begin to receive interest for urbanisation well before its long-term horizon. This creates issues of constructability given the significant amount of building activity occurring.</li> <li>Given the above, other areas outside the study area, such as Cambridge Te Awamutu, and some Hamilton City growth areas, experience a slowdown in development, raising concerns about possible stranded assets and loss of value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>SL1 and Peacocke</b> are fully built out at medium to high density.</li> <li><b>SL2</b> is partially urbanised, with growth concentrated in the northern area along Peacocke's edges and the river.</li> <li><b>Rukuhia</b> is fully reticulated and urbanised, and has become small town rather than a rural village, with significant commuting to Hamilton and the Airport precinct.</li> <li>Additional urban development has been consented <b>along State Highway 3 (SH3)</b> towards <b>Rukuhia and Ōhaupō</b>. <b>Ōhaupō's</b> growth is significantly affected by severance issues arising from traffic on the state highway that bisects the now larger village.</li> <li><b>Around the Airport</b> and its industrial precincts, development continues to host a mix of dry and wet industries, with both commercial and high-value industrial activities located across its expanded footprint. Constraints (gullies, riverbank, peat soils) limit some areas, but intensive industrial clusters fill available developable land.</li> <li><b>Mystery Creek</b> is a national and international tourism/events hub, leveraging proximity to the Airport and the emerging agricultural innovation hub.</li> <li>The <b>area on the eastern side of the NIMT line</b> is emerging as a large-scale industrial</li> </ul>

## Scenario Elements – Key assumptions (continued)

Scenario elements	Key assumptions	
	By 2040	By 2055
<p><b>Residential / Industrial / Commercial development</b></p> <p>(continued)</p>	<p>as the expected economic activity or demand didn't materialise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rukuhia and Ōhaupō</b> have experienced continuous growth and feel the ripple effect of their northern counterpart. However, and still not reticulated, both villages offer a different lifestyle in a rural environment compared to their northern neighbourhood.</li> <li>• In this scenario, both <b>dry and wet industries are enabled</b>, opening the door to a broader range of industrial profiles within the study area.</li> <li>• The <b>Airport and adjacent precincts</b> support a diverse mix of aviation and non-aviation industries, including wet industries, once the wastewater treatment plant is operational. Aviation training is currently ongoing. Wet and dry industries are enabled, the area can accommodate all major industry sectors; however, the area is targeting promising sectors, including high-value manufacturing, which encompasses value-added food production, and the establishment of an export gateway for high-value manufactured goods such as quality food products and medicinal items. There is also a growing interest in healthcare and social assistance, as well as professional, scientific, and technical services. The area aims to grow as a hub for knowledge-based industries.</li> <li>• A rezoning has allowed the Airport Business Zone to be extended to the Waikato River, and the <b>area north of the golf course and Mystery Creek</b> is now enabled for agri-tech industries and high-value manufacturing. However, parts remain undevelopable due to gullies and riverbank constraints.</li> <li>• <b>East side of the NIMT line</b>, sand mining ceased in 2038, with remediation beginning around 2040. Possible future reticulation enables the potential for wet industries alongside a mix of commercial and light industrial activity, some overlapping with the Airport's Western Precinct.</li> <li>• The scale up of the area has brought new opportunities to <b>Mystery Creek</b>, building on its tourism role, expanding as a significant recreational and events-based hub to service the increased population.</li> </ul>	<p>hub, benefiting from the industrial growth on the eastern side of the Hamilton South Links. It hosts sectors such as agri-tech, agri-processing, logistics, healthcare and social assistance, along with professional, scientific, and technical services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail centres of varying scales have appeared in the vicinity of the <b>Airport and Rukuhia</b>, directly competing with established retail hubs in Hamilton such as the CBD and The Base in Te Rapa, as well as Waipā's main towns.</li> <li>• The boundary between rural and urban, once defined by the railway line, has become blurred, and rural communities and farming activities are under pressure.</li> </ul>


## Scenario Elements – Key assumptions (continued)

Scenario elements	Key assumptions	
	By 2040	By 2055
<b>Residential / Industrial / Commercial development</b>  (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The previously intact rural area has experienced significant fragmentation and is under pressure from land use changes away from farming. Rural edges are kept for now along the western part of the train line. The rural farming community benefits from having the agricultural innovation hub close by through easy access to innovations, land use changes in line with agritech and acting as trial farms.</li> </ul>	
 <b>Infrastructure - Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Water allocation</b> is confirmed for Peacocke, but availability in other growth areas remains uncertain and is based on a first-come, first-served basis.</li> <li>The <b>Southern Wastewater Treatment Plant</b> has not yet been fully established and is under construction. Development has continued with on-site wastewater solutions. However, the initial land use assumptions for its construction have already been exceeded, and additional funding is necessary to upgrade the plant to meet the increasing demand. Furthermore, retrofitting small-scale solutions for centralised services is expected in the future, and these costs will need to be included in long-term planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Southern Wastewater Treatment Plant</b> is operational and fully scaled up modularly to meet high demand.</li> <li>Retrofitting costs from early on-site systems remain a financial burden.</li> <li>Water allocation remains stretched; bulk storage and alternative supply options are investigated.</li> </ul>
 <b>Infrastructure - Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hamilton Southern Links</b> is completed earlier and operational, but the unstaged nature of growth has challenged network planning, leading to uneven prioritisation of road upgrades and increased traffic volumes.</li> <li><b>BRT services</b> to the Airport are operational, remain well used, but face catchment and route efficiency issues due to unplanned suburban sprawl and patronage dispersal.</li> <li><b>International passenger flights</b> are steadily increasing, and freight activity is growing in parallel.</li> <li>Development contributions and levies have funded more active mode corridors and other facilities, but the lack of staging has limited the ability to deliver a fully connected, integrated and coordinated network.</li> <li>Accelerated growth has precluded efficient planning of a <b>park and ride</b> facility in the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hamilton Southern Links</b> is fully operational.</li> <li>Freight volumes remain very high, with congestion a constant challenge despite upgrades due to the failure to complete the supporting roading network.</li> <li>Increasing demand for intermodal transport (air/rail/road) to service freight demand and separate freight from private road traffic for safety has led to investigations for freight connections to the airport, supported by rising freight demand and regional connectivity requirements.</li> <li>SH3 through Rukuhia/Ōhaupō/Te Awamutu/ Kihikihi is now experiencing very significant congestion, and the highway is creating even further community severance in Ōhaupō (particularly for the primary school with a diminished access).</li> <li><b>BRT networks</b> extend to Te Awamutu and Cambridge, but capacity and reliability issues remain due to the dispersed urban</li> </ul>

## Scenario Elements – Key assumptions (continued)

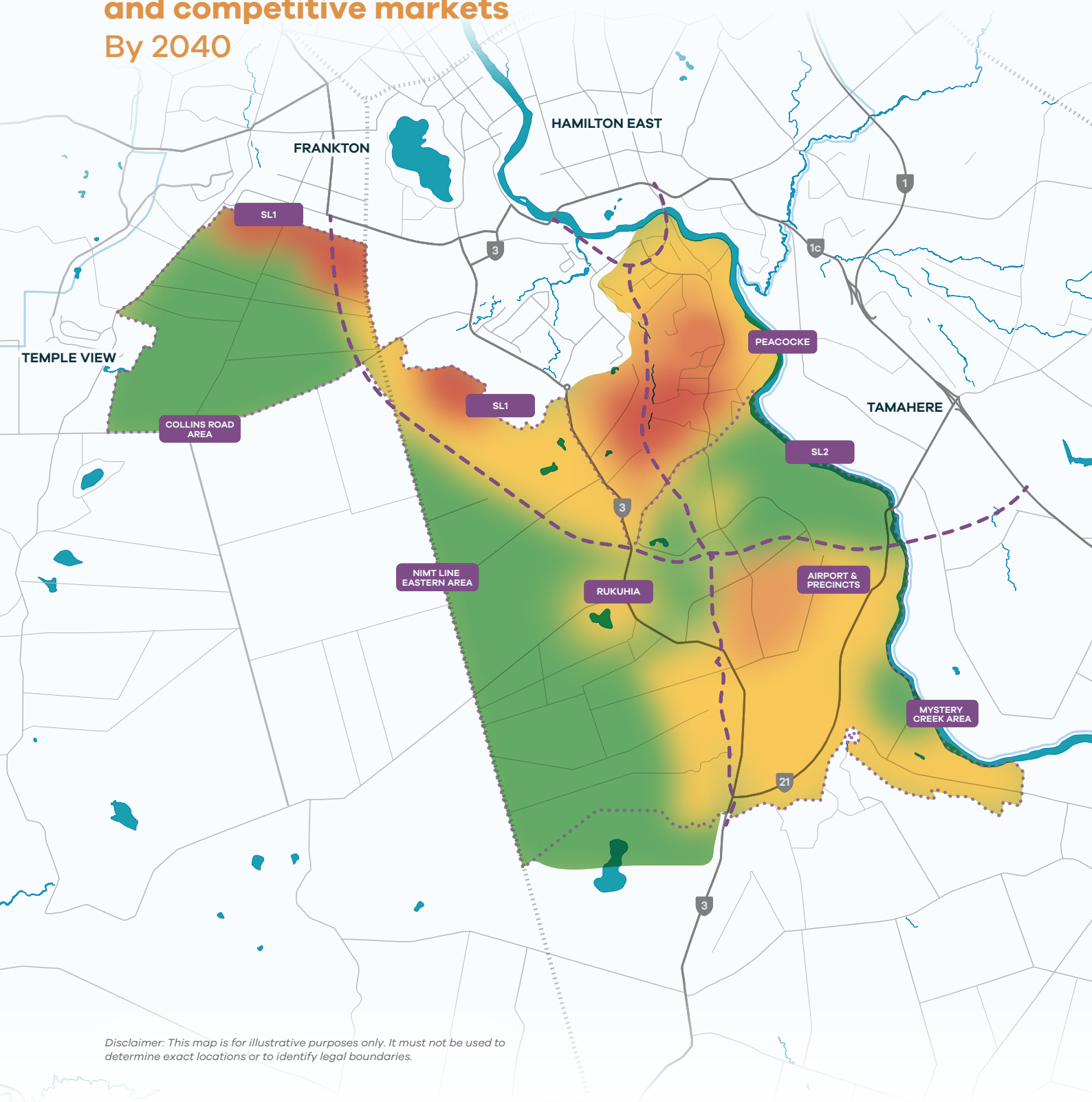
Scenario elements	Key assumptions	
	By 2040	By 2055
<b>Infrastructure - Transport</b>  (continued)		<p>pattern and congestion at pinch points within the study area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lack of advanced planning for bypasses and the lack of significant investment along the current route to cater for increased traffic have created pressure points on the roading network.</li> <li><b>Park and ride</b> for the BRT is less feasible in this scenario as there is less available land and it is more costly. More likely to occur post 2055.</li> </ul>
 <b>Infrastructure - Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rapid growth in multiple locations is more challenging to plan for.</li> <li>Schools and community facilities lag behind demand and has added pressure on existing schools. Expansion at existing sites has necessitated multiple and complex projects, especially where school sites were constrained.</li> <li>Councils are also struggling to deliver community facilities in line with population growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community infrastructure and schools provision has eventually caught up, but in a reactive, patchwork manner.</li> </ul>
 <b>Environment / Heritage/ Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The spread of development across multiple fronts has resulted in the loss of land across all classes of <b>highly productive land</b>.</li> <li>The pace and extent of development have placed added pressure on <b>sensitive habitats</b>, particularly for the Peka Peka (long-tailed bat).</li> <li><b>Blue-green networks</b>, envisioned in structure plans and the Future Proof Strategy, have not been fully realised and are inconsistently delivered due to the lack of coordinated planning. Some subdivisions have incorporated them well, but others are omitting or deferring them.</li> <li>This scenario sees <b>Te Ture Whaimana and environmental limits</b> being used as sole end targets and/ or as defining the lowest boundary of an operating context, limiting ecological improvement and restoration.</li> <li>Developments apply limited restoration under Te Ture Whaimana.</li> <li>Long-tailed bat habitats, peat soils, and riparian corridors are fragmented or degraded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental protection is actively being achieved through the identification of areas unsuitable for development as determined by Te Ture Whaimana and engagement with iwi and mana whenua ensuring the identification and protection of sites of historic and cultural significance.</li> <li>Environmental outcomes are, however, weaker as 'elite' and 'prime' soils have been significantly developed, long-tailed bat habitats have declined, and river sub-catchments face cumulative pollution pressures, exacerbated by climate change (less rainfall, extreme weather events like flooding and droughts).</li> <li>Blue-green corridors exist in parts but are fragmented by rapid land release.</li> </ul>

## Scenario Elements – Key assumptions (continued)

Scenario elements	Key assumptions	
	By 2040	By 2055
 <b>Planning and Staging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Airport Business Zone</b> has extended to the Waikato River.</li> <li>• A <b>strategic boundary adjustment</b> has brought the SL1 and SL2 areas into Hamilton City.</li> <li>• Changes required to enable development <b>east of the NIMT line</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes required to enable higher density development at Rukuhia and Ōhaupō.</li> <li>• Changes required to enable SL2 development.</li> </ul>



## Scenario Three: Accelerated land zoning capacity and competitive markets By 2040

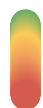


Disclaimer: This map is for illustrative purposes only. It must not be used to determine exact locations or to identify legal boundaries.

### Legend

- District lines
- State Highways
- Waikato River

- Railway
- Hamilton Southern Links designation
- Study area boundary



Lower or no development / activity\*

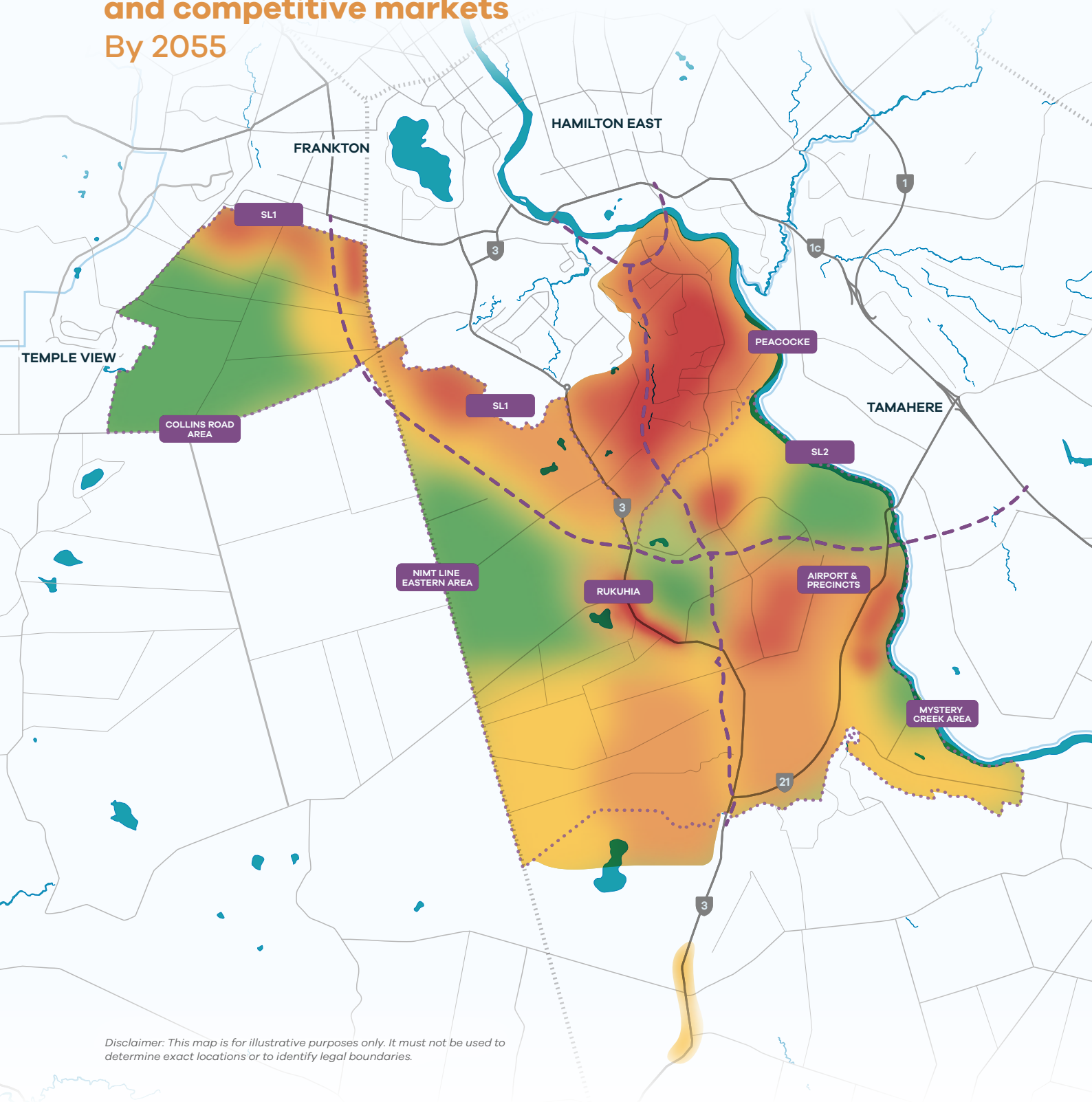
Higher level of development / activity\*

\*Level of residential, industrial, or commercial development or activity compared to the 2025 baseline.





## Scenario Three: Accelerated land zoning capacity and competitive markets By 2055



### Legend

- District lines
- State Highways
- Waikato River

- Railway
- Hamilton Southern Links designation
- Study area boundary



Lower or no development / activity\*

Higher level of development / activity\*

\*Level of residential, industrial, or commercial development or activity compared to the 2025 baseline.



## What does the “By 2055” scenario imply in terms of our outcome statements?



### Employment and Job Opportunities

By 2055, the study area is booming with industrial and commercial activity. Planning reforms have led to widespread and largely uncontrolled land release based on exercise of private property rights: both dry and wet industries are permitted in many precincts once infrastructure is enabled. The Fast-track Approvals mechanism has allowed many housing and industrial projects to go ahead, boosting job creation, especially in manufacturing, food processing, logistics, and freight. The area hosts mixed industrial clusters, however, the lack of buffering zones and regulatory overlays has led to increased sensitivity issues and ultimately operational effects.



### A Great Place to Live

Housing is plentiful, though quality is mixed. With land freed up aggressively, many residential subdivisions appear in periphery areas, including SL2, Rukuhia, Ōhaupō, and outlying rural zones. Demand has pushed density up in part of SL1 and Peacocke, though community amenities, green space, and school provision sometimes lag behind. Some neighbourhoods are well-planned with active mode links and parks; others are more utilitarian, built quickly to meet demand. Because of strong central direction, rule changes have required councils to allow more housing typologies and smaller lot sizes, with variable impact on affordability.



### Easy to Get Around

Transport infrastructure has expanded, but not uniformly. Hamilton Southern Links is completed, with major strategic corridors built early. The accelerated growth has not hindered priority roads and freight links. Public transport (including BRT) exists in multiple corridors, however, catchment shifts and demand pressure mean some routes are stretched. Some areas are not well serviced by public transport putting pressure on the roading network. Walking, cycling, and active mode infrastructure are present in newer suburbs but less so in rapidly developed fringe zones. Freight volumes are high, leading to congestion, especially where road capacity lags or wastewater truck movements persist.



### **Supporting Iwi Aspirations**

Planning reforms have challenged iwi involvement. Maaori housing developments become more visible in growth cells, compared with more isolated Maaori land holdings. Mystery Creek and cultural event hubs perform well as places of cultural expression and enterprise. Cultural and heritage sites are not well protected given the pace of growth and there is an increased loss of sites given the limited focus on their identification and protection.



### **Caring for the Environment and the Waikato River**

Under the new planning regime, there are environmental limits (water quality, biodiversity, natural hazards) that must be respected. Blue-green networks are established but due to sheer scale and volume of growth, many ecosystems are under pressure. Peat lake catchments see some restoration, but remain under pressure from surrounding land uses. Long-tailed bat habitats are fragmented in some areas; offset mitigation is common but not always sufficient. The health of the river improves in parts, but some sub-catchments show declining metrics due to cumulative runoff, sewage overflows, or inadequate stormwater treatment in fringe growth areas.



### **Level of Strategic Infrastructure Alignment**

This scenario aligns strongly with the Going for Growth / Housing Growth national agenda - freeing up land, and fast-tracking. It meets many national legislative and policy goals and council obligations in terms of enabling land supply through rezoning, consent streamlining, etc. However, alignment with environmental strategy (like Te Ture Whaimana, Future Proof blue-green networks) is weaker—often reactive rather than proactive. An inability to understand cumulative effects leads to missed opportunities for growth to pay for itself and to recoup the costs of growth fully. Some decisions also push the boundaries of consistency with environmental strategy and iwi expectations.



## **Feasibility and Constructability**

This scenario outlines that formerly difficult regulatory barriers have been reduced. Infrastructure funding is available through increased development levies however, increases in demand for infrastructure have brought forward funding requirements which are unlikely to be affordable. Existing infrastructure elsewhere is underutilised, resulting in debt that can't be repaid. Significant risks remain - service delivery lag (wastewater, water supply), strain on transport corridors, environmental remediation costs, and possible local opposition where environmental or cultural values are affected. Some areas are built on more marginal soils; flood risk or stormwater infrastructure sometimes falls behind fast growth. Scaling up to full servicing remains a major challenge.