



Invest in the **WAIKATO DISTRICT**

2024/25



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Welcome to the Waikato district

Nau mai ki te takiwaa o Waikato

Message from the mayor

Our vibrant and growing district is one of the most promising and evolving areas in the Waikato region and Aotearoa.

We're conveniently located in the heart of New Zealand's Golden Triangle, offering unparalleled opportunity to businesses and investors. The district is just a short drive from Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, and is easily accessible via State Highway 1 and the recently completed expressway, making connectivity seamless.

The district's close proximity to Hamilton, with its burgeoning inland port, further solidifies its status as a logistical powerhouse. Investors will appreciate the Waikato district's easy access to two major coastal ports, Auckland and Tauranga, for streamlined trade and transport.

Our district's fertile soil, strong agricultural and trade heritage, vibrant communities, and pockets of innovation create a dynamic environment with strong economic growth potential. Our unique blend of strategic accessibility, infrastructure, diverse communities, strong culture and flourishing local economy makes it an ideal choice for businesses and investors seeking to thrive in New Zealand's most promising growth corridor.

The Waikato district is a wonderful place to live, work and invest, and is emerging as a high growth area which has potential for significant economic growth.

Whether you're an existing business, looking to invest, or considering relocation, we warmly invite you to explore the opportunities and growth potential of the Waikato district.

Naaku iti noa, naa,



Mayor Jacqui Church



Our district's vision

Liveable, thriving and connected communities.

Liveable

Liveable communities are well-planned and people-friendly, providing a range of quality residential options, social infrastructure, and amenities. They reflect what's important to people and support a shared sense of belonging in the local community and the wider district.

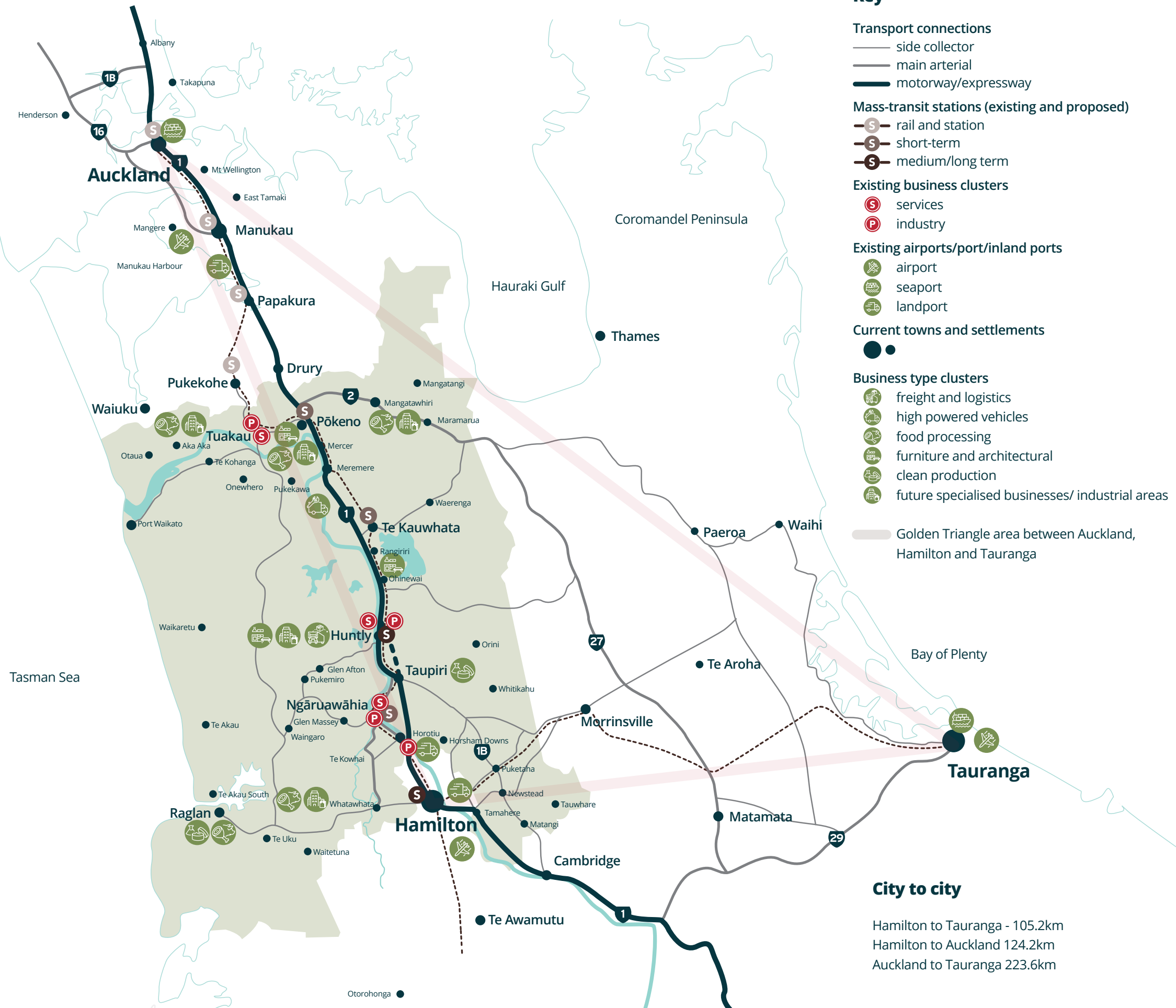
Thriving

Thriving communities participate in council decision-making and community-led projects, having the capacity and capability to provide input into the management of their local assets and sustain the local business sectors that provide local employment.

Connected

Connected communities have fit-for-purpose physical and social infrastructure to create liveable, thriving communities. Connectivity through roads, public transport, commuter trails, walkways, and cycleways, as well as digital capabilities, enables rapid information sharing and engagement in activities. These various connections will shape the district's future pattern and enable communities to access services and amenities that meet their social, health, education, employment, and wellbeing needs.

Map of the Waikato district



City to city

Hamilton to Tauranga - 105.2km
Hamilton to Auckland 124.2km
Auckland to Tauranga 223.6km

An unbeatable location, ready for your investment

With its sprawling 418,893 hectares, the Waikato district is a strategic gem nestled at the heart of the 'Golden Triangle', alongside Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga.

The Golden Triangle currently fuels over 50% of New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) and is home to around half of the country's population. This economic powerhouse is set to grow exponentially, with the New Zealand Government forecasting a 35% population boom over the next 25 years.

The Waikato River, the longest in New Zealand, meanders through the district, nurturing the region's biodiversity, providing essential potable water, and holding profound cultural significance for iwi and hapuu. The district's boundary stretches along New Zealand's western coast, from Aotea Harbour to Port Waikato, and touches the eastern coastline at Miranda on the Hauraki Gulf. Its expanse also shelters extensive areas of invaluable indigenous vegetation.

Strong local workforce

With a younger than average and fast growing population, the Waikato district has strong workforce potential.

The combination of younger population, proximity to Auckland and Hamilton, more affordable housing and the expressway reducing commuting time, the district is strategically placed for businesses to attract and retain top talent.

A snapshot of the Waikato district¹

Estimated population in 2024 of
92,500
2.6%
2.2% population growth from 2023 - higher than the national average of 1.8%

Approx.
233,315
COWS

11,124
business units

2.8%
business unit growth in 2023, compared to 1.7% for New Zealand

\$3,864m
gross domestic product in 2023
(up 3.5% from 2022)

27,560
filled jobs in 2023, up 3.2% from 2022.

2,196
tourism jobs filled

The manufacturing industry grew by 6.5% over the 2022-23 period and contributed **\$21.8m** to the district's total growth of **\$132.1m**.

10,227
highly skilled jobs

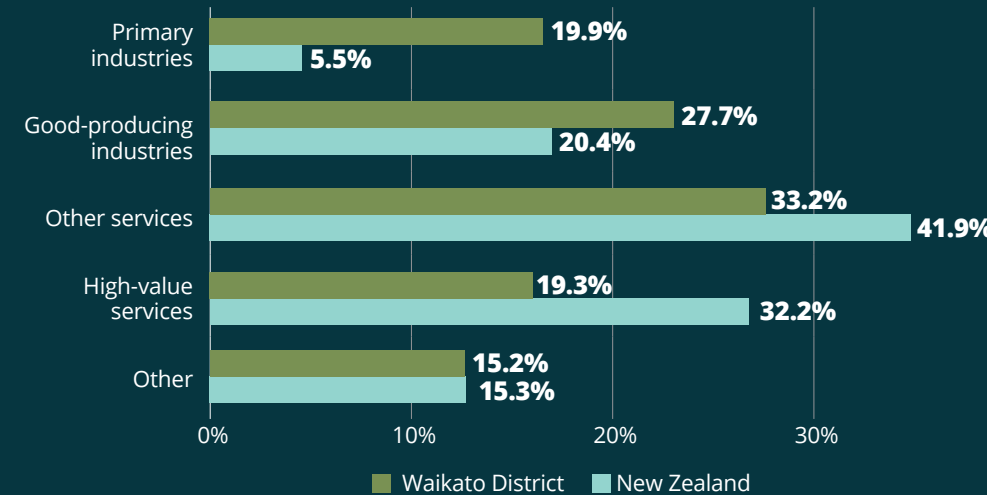
About 1 in 5 Waikato employees work in a primary industry

\$140,200
gross domestic product (GDP) per filled job

\$129,744
average household income

Agriculture, forestry and fishing is the largest sector, accounting for
16.6% of GDP (or \$640.5 million)

Economic structure by broad sector, 2023
% of total, year to March 2023



The average house value in the Waikato district was **\$750,787** in March 2024, which is lower and more affordable than the New Zealand median of **\$933,612**.

The Waikato district outperformed New Zealand in the following wellbeing domains:
environment health housing

Projections show the Waikato district will be home to up to **145,900** people by 2048.
The average age of people in our district is **35.3**

90%+ of New Zealand's freight is transported by road, with 42% of the total freight (by tonnage) being moved within the Golden Triangle (between Waikato, Tauranga and Auckland).³

The district covers more than **400,000 hectares** and has 25,514 urban, rural or residential properties.²
100 km to the Port of Auckland
100 km to Port of Tauranga
Approx. **1,150 km** of coastline, including Raglan, Aotea and Kawhia.

² Source: 2023/24 Waikato District Council Annual Report
³ Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment 2024



Opportunities for growth

We continually seek new opportunities to drive economic growth, enhance productivity, and build stronger, more resilient communities. Investors are encouraged to tap into the Waikato district's rich legacy and forward-thinking mindset.

 **Innovation and technology**

 **Freight and logistics**

 **Sustainable manufacturing**

 **Agriculture and food production**

 **Tourism**

 **Social enterprise**

 **Health care and social services**

 **Construction**

 **Scientific and professional services**

Join the best

The Waikato district has some of the most fertile soil in the country. This exceptional soil and breathtaking natural landscapes are pivotal in driving our district and the country's economy, fostering growth, prosperity, and diverse opportunities.

The Waikato's primary sector is not only a key contributor to the economy but is also stimulating wider technological advancements and sustainability practices. With a strong foundation in dairy, meat and horticulture, we are pushing boundaries with agritech solutions that enhance productivity and promote sustainable practices.

In our pursuit of sustainable progress, we place importance on preserving the natural environment where possible, safeguarding indigenous biodiversity, and honouring the value of our region's high-quality soil. As we cherish and nurture this extraordinary land, we are laying the groundwork for a future where communities flourish, economies thrive, and the enduring legacy of nature is upheld.

With a commitment to fostering innovation and sustainability, our district is not just keeping pace with the future but actively shaping it. We ensure our local roads are well-connected with the national state highway network, providing safe and accessible roads that contribute to the success of our district's economic development.

Whether leveraging our logistics network, exploring sustainable manufacturing techniques, or diving into the growing local tourism sector, the Waikato district is where visionary ideas flourish and emerging industries thrive.

The Waikato district is building a prosperous future that seamlessly blends tradition with innovation, and we'd love you to join us on our journey.

Invest in the Waikato district

The Waikato district has long been a favoured destination for businesses, residents, and visitors, and is renowned for its adaptability, strength, and growth.

10 reasons to invest in the Waikato district

1. Strategic location

Nestled within New Zealand's Golden Triangle, the Waikato district offers unparalleled access to three major cities: Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga. This prime location ensures effortless connectivity through ports, logistics and various travel choices, making it a strategic hub for businesses.

2. Thriving primary sector and other industries

The Waikato district's rich agricultural sector is the foundation of our local economy. Innovations in tech and sustainable practices make it a leader in productivity and environmental stewardship, offering vast opportunities for growth and investment.

3. Strong local workforce

The Waikato district has one of New Zealand's youngest and fastest growing populations, with an average age of just 38 years old. These factors coupled with proximity to quality tertiary institutions and vocational training providers ensure that we have a youthful and well qualified local workforce.

4. Dedicated investor service

Investors looking to start their journey in the Waikato district can access our dedicated team who will work alongside you from the beginning of your project and continue to support your business as you establish in the district. We have an experienced team of economic and community-led development advisors who work closely with highly skilled infrastructure development advisors to ensure you can navigate quickly to establish in the Waikato district. Our team are committed to ensuring all your infrastructure, regulatory and workforce needs are navigated seamlessly with a cohesive wrap-around service.

5. Forward-thinking and diverse economy

The Waikato region is a great location for emerging industries, including innovation and technology, freight and logistics, sustainable manufacturing, agritech, and tourism. The Waikato district's commitment to advancing technology and fostering resilient communities makes it a fertile ground for business success.

6. Strong sub-regional partnerships

We work closely with our economic development colleagues at a sub-regional level to ensure investors are navigated to the most appropriate location in the Waikato region. We have joint work programmes with both Hamilton City Council and Waipa District Council, and a strong affiliation with the Franklin economic broker. We are a one-stop shop for investors who are interested in taking advantage of development opportunities on offer.

7. Waikato Tainui

Waikato District Council is focused on working with Waikato-Tainui to support economic development opportunities in the district. that will have benefits for generations to come.

Tainui Group Holdings is the commercial entity of Waikato-Tainui with the role of building the economic wealth of the iwi by growing and protecting investments in land and other assets. With an asset base valued at \$2.4b dollars, Waikato Tainui are a powerful commercial entity and the region's largest developer.

8. Rich cultural heritage

With a history dating back to the arrival of Maaori in Aotearoa and as the home of the Kiingitanga movement, the Waikato district has several important heritage and cultural sites.

Kiingitanga (Maaori King movement) was founded in 1858 to unite Maaori under a single sovereign. Tuurangawaewae Marae in Ngaaruawaahia is the principal marae of the movement. The primary hapuu for this marae is Ngaati Mahuta. Located on the banks of the Waikato River, this marae is a place for gatherings, cultural events, and important ceremonies.

This deep cultural heritage and identity not only attracts thousands of visitors each year but brings a unique characteristic to the Waikato district.

9. Vibrant lifestyle and community

The Waikato district has one of New Zealand's youngest populations, with an average age of just 38 years old. Our family-friendly towns, a strong sense of community, and growing employment opportunities make the district an attractive place to live. This is why multiple generations of families choose to live here, and those who once left for other opportunities or endeavours are now returning to work and raise their families here. The district's community spirit creates an inspiring environment where businesses can thrive, and employees can enjoy a balanced, fulfilling lifestyle.

10. Well-planned for growth

Waikato District Council has planned well for the predicted growth with the development of Waikato 2070, a 50 year strategic plan for economic growth and development.



Strategic location

In the heart of the North Island, the Waikato district's close proximity to Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga provides easy access to New Zealand's largest international airport, major domestic airports, major markets, and inland and coastal ports. The district's well-developed infrastructure, including a network of highways and rail lines, adds to seamless connectivity for transport and logistics.

The district's unique position enhances the appeal for businesses and supports a diverse range of industries, from agriculture and manufacturing to agritech and tourism, making it an attractive and strategic investment destination.

Northgate Business Park, Horotiu



Northgate Business Park: A gateway to success

From Waikato to the world

Ideally positioned to leverage the substantial growth the Waikato is experiencing is the 100-hectare Northgate Business Park in Horotiu.

Sitting halfway between Auckland and Tauranga and just 5km north of Hamilton city, the business park's strategic location provides unmatched connectivity with direct access to major roadways and rail systems in the heart of New Zealand's Golden Triangle.

UPC Development Group launched the park in 2013 with anchor tenant Waikato Milking Systems in their 9,000m² state-of-the-art facility and Northgate is now home to a wide range of businesses including the Ports of Auckland Waikato Freight Hub, WEL Networks and Riverlea Group.

Setting a new benchmark in environmental standards, the development protects existing waterways, with streams and gullies featured prominently. Being close to Hamilton and the new Te Awa Lakes residential development, the park is perfectly situated for the local workforce and for those wanting to make the most of the rural lifestyle.

As the Waikato district continues to flourish, stage four plots are now available for sale or lease and Northgate's prime location offers incredible opportunities for investors and businesses looking to tap into the region's dynamic growth potential.

Find out more www.northgatepark.co.nz

Zealong Tea Estate

Waikato's tea treasure: A journey to the perfect blend

Zealong Tea Estate is New Zealand's only commercial tea plantation, attracting over 100,000 visitors annually. Founded in 1996 by Vincent Chen, Zealong began with just 130 surviving tea cuttings after importing 1,500. Today, over 1.2 million organic tea plants thrive on the Gordonton estate, known for their premium quality and unique traits, attributed to Waikato's ideal climate and rich soil.

Zealong produces 20 tonnes of tea annually while modelling best practice for the tea industry with its sustainability initiatives. Beyond its award-winning teas, Zealong is a multifaceted destination featuring the Camellia Restaurant, luxury accommodation, event venues, a retail boutique and tea tasting room which is open to the public.

Positioned within New Zealand's economic Golden Triangle, Zealong is suited to tourism and exports, supporting future plans for growth and innovation in the tea industry. A hotspot for tea lovers, Zealong has well and truly cultivated success for the district.



Visit www.zealong.com



Artist impression Sleepyhead Estate, Ohinewai

Sleepyhead Estate

Sleepyhead Estate: An investor's dream

Each year the Waikato district sees an influx of people moving to the area in search of a better place to live and work. Imagine a place where you can live, work, and play—all in the same neighbourhood.

That's the vision behind Sleepyhead Estate, a brand-new 176-hectare community developed by The Comfort Group, the family-owned company behind the beloved Sleepyhead beds.

Relocating operations to the Waikato district brings huge opportunities for like-minded investors and businesses looking for a strategic and connected location, whilst helping to unlock the vision of building a vibrant community for thousands, stimulating the local economy and creating thousands of new jobs.

Maximising accessibility with location

Situated right by the Waikato Expressway, with strong transport links to major cities, the estate offers easy access to Auckland, Hamilton, and Tauranga.

National retail distribution centres, large soft furnishing manufacturers and other such factory outlets would benefit from this Golden Triangle connectivity, large open spaces for purpose-built facilities with room to grow and a rural lifestyle drawcard for employees.

Dreams to reality

Sleepyhead Estate represents a transformative vision that offers an unparalleled opportunity to a range of investors looking for a strategic edge with a location that has the space to accommodate exponential growth.

This super-hub will be a catalyst for job creation in the Waikato district, and investors looking to align closely with community aspirations and long-term sustainability can be a part of this vision which values social and environmental outcomes.

www.sleepyheadestate.co.nz

Waikato Milking Systems

Empowering dairy farmers with technology that prioritises efficiency, safety, and animal welfare

Waikato Milking Systems are at the forefront of developing rotary milking systems and automation technologies. These innovations help dairy farmers enhance productivity, efficiency, and profitability through informed decision-making.

With a reputation for innovation and expertise, the company creates groundbreaking technologies that redefine the limits of dairy farming. Their systems improve productivity and enhance the well-being of operators and animals.

By integrating data-driven technologies that collect real-time data on herd performance, milk quality, and system efficiency, farmers gain valuable insights for more informed management decisions.

The company has also developed smart technologies that track the health and performance of individual cows as well as overall herd trends.

Waikato Milking Systems is also revolutionising dairy farming with semi-robotic technology. ErgoPOD™ streamlines the milking process, reducing the physical strain on operators and increasing milking speed, productivity and efficiency in the parlour.

With over 50 years of experience, the Waikato-based company is well-positioned to drive future advancements in dairy technology, setting new standards for sustainability and precision in dairy farming.



Find out more at www.waikatomilking.com

Thriving primary sector and other industries

The Waikato district boasts a strong and diverse economy.

Agriculture is a key industry, with dairy farming, horticulture, and forestry playing major roles. The district has also seen growth in manufacturing, construction, and retail.

Industrial parks and mixed-use commercial developments, such as [Northgate Business Park](#) in Horotiu and [Gateway Business Park](#) in Pokeno, have fostered a thriving business environment, with both startups and established companies now calling the Waikato district home.

The growth of agritech, alongside emerging fields like agri-tourism and future foods, will create new opportunities across the Waikato that will require a suitably skilled workforce to drive future growth. With work being undertaken by agencies to support the growth of a skilled workforce, the Waikato district has a strong workforce to meet the future requirements of these sectors.



Forward-thinking and diverse economy

The Waikato district is home to many socially and sustainability-focused businesses that support the circular economy model. We are focused on building an ecosystem of entrepreneurial innovation that leads the way in creating socioeconomic strength within our communities.

The growing tourism sector presents opportunities in hospitality and the emerging visitor industry, while our ability to innovate and integrate technology into business operations provides significant opportunities in tech development and advanced manufacturing.

The district embraces environmental initiatives and innovations that focus on reducing carbon emissions and promoting green energy production. We have a goal of a 25% emissions reduction in the district by 2030.

We are focused on supporting businesses to adopt sustainable practices across different sectors, such as processing invasive koi carp into commercial products and establishing solar farms. The Waikato district has a focus on turning waste into valuable resources, contributing to a circular economy. Our district's openness to new ways of developing sectors ensures a forward-thinking and adaptive economy ready to meet future challenges.



Raglan Resource Recovery Centre

Achieving a zero-waste future, one community at a time Waikato's go-to sustainable hub

Like many areas in Aotearoa, the Waikato district produces a large volume of waste, with households contributing around 130 kg to landfills annually. Since 2000, Raglan Resource Recovery Centre (RRRC) has been helping to change this by turning trash into treasure, diverting 78% of waste through recycling and reuse while educating and encouraging the community to reduce and reuse.

Last year alone, RRRC diverted over 14,000 cubic meters of waste and returned \$1.64 million in value to the community.

RRRC has become a sustainability hub, offering go-to spots like Kaahu's Nest, which repurposes pre-loved goods, and the Organics Yard which composts 250 tonnes annually.

The centre also supports the community with local employment and training opportunities, while educating residents on responsible waste management.

With initiatives like New Zealand's first food scrap collection, the Business Collections Hub, and expanding their resource recovery centres to another 21 across Auckland, RRRC continues to innovate towards a zero-waste future.





Vibrant lifestyle and community

We believe that the happiness of our people, the success of our economy, and the vibe of our communities are all connected.

As a rapidly growing district, we continue to focus on four key things:

1. Our communities

2. Our identity

3. Our people

4. Our businesses

By using smart planning, backing community and business projects, and nurturing collaboration and strategic partnerships, we're shaping our communities for the better.

We want to create the right environment for all businesses to thrive while making the most of the district's offerings.

A district of choice to live and work

The Waikato district offers convenient and efficient transportation networks and good cycling and walking connections such as the [Te Awa River Ride](#).

The district takes pride in its cultural heritage and being the home of a growing motorsport cluster housed at [Hampton Downs](#). From a tourism perspective, the district is a captivating destination featuring natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventure, including the iconic west coast beaches of [Raglan](#) and the stunning organic tea fields of [Zealong Tea Estate](#).

Join us

The Waikato district is a vibrant and promising place at the heart of New Zealand's North Island.

For more information on how to navigate investing in our dynamic district and to explore the opportunities awaiting you, please contact one of our friendly economic development advisors for a confidential discussion or visit www.takitini.com.

Email – takitini@waikatodc.govt.nz



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We look forward to welcoming you to the Waikato district.

Contact the team... we'd love to meet in person and discuss the opportunity.

www.takitini.com



To find out more visit our
website **Takitini.com**, connect
with one of our team or email
takitini@waikatodc.govt.nz.

www.takitini.com