



## **Property Development Set To Thrive Thanks To Collective Voice**

**TAURANGA, 1 March 2022:** Uniting Tauranga’s property ownership, development and building communities is proving to be a major success as the city’s Urban Task Force (UTF) celebrates its first anniversary.

In just 12 months the organisation has become an influential voice within local government, having weighed in on important debates such as city planning changes, Tauranga’s Long Term Plan, parking strategy, CBD strategy and Tauranga’s building consent process.

“We strongly believe in a collective local property voice – together we can achieve more,” says UTF Board Chairman Scott Adams.

While UTF’s success in the past year shows the power of collaboration, Adams warns more hard work is yet to come and the need to unite is stronger than ever.

“Tauranga’s housing crisis isn’t going away anytime soon. It’s imperative that the property industry’s voice is heard in local government discussions so land can be developed and intensification can be achieved in an efficient, cohesive and practical way.

“We see the forthcoming year being even busier for our property industry and we will continue to advocate for positive planning and investment decisions, growth, collaboration, and accountability so new and renewed urban communities can thrive.”

The incorporated society now has almost 50 members and Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with Priority One, Tauranga Chamber of Commerce, Property Council, Tauranga City Council and the Tauranga Moana Museum Trust.

In its inaugural year UTF has completed six local council submissions, represented its members at two local government hearings, undertaken a legal opinion review on a major planning change, and worked closely with Tauranga City Council to review its CBD strategy and building consent processes.

“The latter discussions have been really beneficial,” Adams explains. “We presented 19 points and recommended solutions to the council’s Building and Environmental Planning team to help improve the consent process and I’m pleased to say that work to progress all 19 concerns is now underway or already complete.

“That really shows the difference UTF can make. By coming together and having one collective voice, the property industry can play a crucial role in addressing housing shortages in this region along with poor spatial planning and under-investment. We believe powerful, knowledgeable leadership is the key to encouraging informed strategic decision-making.”

In addition to advocacy, UTF has also held nine events and networking opportunities for its members which included site tours of new developments like Thirty Eight Elizabeth (Farmers’ building), Waikato University’s Selwyn St student accommodation, and the new Camden Apartments on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Audiences with Tauranga’s Commissioners, Reserve Bank Governor Adrian Orr and Transport Minister Michael Wood were also arranged.

Adams says the idea for a Tauranga-focused property industry group was first floated in late 2020 to unite some of the growing factions, and to work together for a prosperous city. UTF was officially launched in February 2021 and coincided with Commissioners taking over from elective representatives at Tauranga City Council.

“To look back and see what we’ve achieved in just one year is extremely satisfying. Our industry – like many others – is facing a lot of challenges right now. Covid-19 and associated supply chain and labour force issues are front of mind, but increases in Development Contributions, the commercial rates differential, the larger Housing Enabling Bill, and upcoming changes to the RMA are equally as important,” he says.

The 2022 calendar of activities for UTF is looking busy with the future of the city’s Commissioners up in the air, an outcome expected shortly on Plan Change 27 which UTF has strongly advocated against, significant decisions due on important amenities such as the stadium and the proposed civic precinct. Infrastructure to unlock more housing developments is urgently needed as are further improvements to processes which slow developments.

“We are confident that UTF is the right model to tackle these challenges head on. We are committed to promoting growth and collaboration to help increase land supply, attract central Government funding, and investment in transport, infrastructure, education, and civic amenities for the benefit of our whole community.”

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About the Urban Task Force

The UTF is an incorporated society formed to provide powerful, knowledgeable leadership and the benefits of years of experience to Tauranga city's local authorities. Members comprise of some of the city's most influential developers, investors, professionals and iwi deeply concerned about the direction the city is taking.

For more information about the Urban Task Force see: <https://urbantaskforce.co.nz/>

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