

Urban design



The Transport Agency's commitment to good urban design

Urban design has been incorporated along the TEL, helping to enhance the experience for drivers. Examples of urban design are visible on the bridge panels and at the entry 'gateway' points to the TEL. The artworks tell the story of the TEL journey and help connect road users with the coastal character, history and cultural significance of the area.

Mangatawa interchange

Inspiration for the panel design has come from the location of the interchange and legend of Mangatawa. A mother and baby whale were swimming in the Tauranga Harbour and having difficulties finding their way back to sea. The whales, unable to reach the ocean, drank from a magical spring that turned them into stone. The mother whale (Mangatawa) was frozen gazing northward to the sea with the baby (Hikurangi) nestled beside her. The father whale (Kopukairoa) came in search of his family. He saw that they had turned to stone. He too, drank from the spring and became fixed behind the mother and baby whale.



Mangatawa interchange panel design

Domain Road interchange, Parton Road overbridge, Bell Road underpass and Maketu Road bridge

The panel design links to the flax milling history of the area to the east, stretching from Pāpāmoa through to Maketu. Flax became a commodity for trade during the 1820's. In 1872, a steam powered flax mill began operation at Little Waihi, near Maketu, and a flax mill was also located at the end of Bell Road, near the Te Kopua Pā site.



Flax panel design for Domain Road interchange, Parton Road overbridge, Bell Road underpass and Maketu Road bridge.

Kaituna River bridge

The Kaituna River bridge lies in an area rich in history, with two historic sites - the Te Kopua Pā and flax mill - in close proximity.

The river itself has long been used for transport and recreation by both Māori and European.

The cultural significance is reflected in the bridge panel design and the pouwhenua whakairo (carved posts).

Kaituna River bridge external panels

The river facing panel design depicts a waka, the traditional form of transport. A koru represents either fern/Ponga fronds or waves of the sea.



Kaituna River bridge internal panels

The road facing panel design resembles the teeth of a Taniwha, representing the local legend of Te Mapu the Taniwha.



Pouwhenua whakairo design

The four pouwhenua whakairo represent the interests and history of the local Tangata Whenua (Tapuika, Ngati Whakauae, Waitaha, Ngati He, Nga Potiki and Ngati Pukenga). The pou are placed on the seaward side of the shared path, near the bridge, and are positioned to align with the four cardinal points.



Paengaroa gateway

The Waharoa (gateway) structure at the Paengaroa roundabout marks Te urunga tawhiti, the most eastern entry and exit point of the TEL.

The TEL team worked closely with the TEL Tangata Whenua Advisory Group to achieve a gateway structure that told a story and complemented the area.

The design provides for and acknowledges recognition of the Pa site within the Pukaingataru tribal lands, which was part of a network of waahi marakai (gardening villages) that were established during the times of the Tapuika ancestor Marukukere (1600's).

The design captures the essence of the village through the representation of palisading and a carved tomokanga (entry point).

The carving depicts Marukukere holding a kahehu (wooden spade) with kumara (sweet potato) and the accompanying figures represent his sons which are also shown in the pou of the palisade.



Paengaroa Te Waharoa

Tauranga gateway

The location of the Domain Road interchange can be described as the eastern gateway to Tauranga. Artwork has been installed at two sites; either side of the interchange.

As travellers arrive from the east they will see a Pā structure that represents 'arriving' to Tauranga. This draws on the history of the Pāpāmoa Hills Pā sites, which form the backdrop to this location.

As travellers leave they will see the Spinifex that represents the seaside and beach. This imagery aligns with the 'journey' theme, and the beach, as it is the reason many visit or live in the area.



Domain Road interchange aerial highlighting the two Tauranga gateway sites



Palisade Pā gateway



Spinifex