

## SmartGrowth Environment and Sustainability Forum July 2016

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### 1) Purpose

To present the position statement of the SmartGrowth Environment and Sustainability (E&S) Forum regarding the sector requirements when considering accommodating growth within the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

### 2) Introduction

According to the Environment and Sustainability (E&S) Forum Terms of Reference (2015) its role is to have on-going input into the Strategy thinking, development and implementation including the following specific aspects:

- Providing input and feedback in respect of partner projects relating to strategy actions where such input is sought by the Implementation Management Group (IMG) particularly with regard to sustainable development/management considerations
- Monitoring of relevant strategy actions.
- The development of statutory and non-statutory policies by the SmartGrowth Partners that either arise from the strategy or have the potential to impact on the strategy.
- SmartGrowth representations to regional and national forums and central government.

Using the grassroots knowledge of the forum to alert SmartGrowth to emerging environmental matters and sustainability developments that may impact on SmartGrowth policy and direction.

### **Our people and our prosperity depend upon the life supporting capacity of our environment.**

The following positions and outcomes sought are all inter-connected and need to be considered in the context of the complex environmental and social systems in which we exist.

### 3) Key current Environment and sustainability concerns

- I. Increased sprawl of low density housing with associated environmental, affordability and transport related issues which work against good placemaking. The infrastructure and settlements built now lock in behaviours and emissions for decades.
- II. Issues regarding water quality and quantity
- III. Significant loss of indigenous biodiversity
- IV. Impacts of development on coastal and marine environments (including flora and fauna)

- V. Loss of community 'heart' and identity through poor urban design
- VI. Poor environmental health resulting in poor community health
- VII. Poor resource recovery and low recycling rates and waste minimisation
- VIII. Lack of action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- IX. Inefficient use of energy in the built environment
- X. Continued threat of the conversion to other uses of our productive land and soils
- XI. Car dependency due to lack of public transport and safe, active transport alternatives
- XII. Use of agrichemicals, methyl bromide, and other hazardous substances.
- XIII. Preparedness for climate change effects and disaster recovery.
- XIV. Horticultural and Agricultural land use regarding risks to food security and environmental degradation.
- XV. The need for integrated planning to manage growth in the interests of improving the quality of life and wellbeing of communities.

#### 4) Position Statements

- a) **Urban Form:** The concept of a compact city is strongly supported. It is critical to design vibrant settlements that allow people to live in proximity to jobs and urban amenities, with abundant, accessible and attractive transport choices. A clear vision is needed to establish a sustainable and resilient city that protects the natural environment. Urban form (including compact city) is the primary enabler of a sustainable and low carbon future for the sub-region. When considering horizontal infrastructure, multifunctional green infrastructure is a primary consideration
- b) **Coastal Environments:** It is of vital importance that our coastal ecosystems are restored and protected. These include Dunelands, Harbours and Wetlands as well as the in-shore Benthic Environment. Access to and use of regionally significant surf-breaks should be protected.
- c) **Ecological corridors, Biodiversity and Water Bodies** are of high value (both ecologically and economically) and should be identified, honoured, protected and restored.
- d) **Productive Land and Food Security:** Productive land is protected and provision is made to enable citizens to access locally and communally produced food supplies.
- e) **Water:** Maintaining and restoring waterbodies to the best water (considering the particular environment) quality and ensuring sustainable water use (quantity) needs to be embedded in any development and management strategies together with policies to promote its most efficient and productive use.
- f) **Air quality:** Health and environmental impacts of exposure to small particulate matter, chemicals e.g. methyl bromide and from burning coal. A precautionary approach to the use of agrichemicals and other chemicals, based on peer reviewed scientific papers is needed to protect the wellbeing of urban and rural residents.
- g) **Climate Change:**

i. Mitigation: Ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets consistent with national and international targets to keep global temperature increase below 2 degrees C need to be established and implemented through a robust action plan to reduce emissions.

ii. Adaptation: A comprehensive community adaptation plan needs to be developed to understand, prepare for, and respond to the risks and impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise and increased severity and frequency of storm events.

**h) Resource Use, Resource Recovery and Waste Minimisation:** Best practice resource use, resource recovery and waste minimisation practices needs to be implemented to meet aggressive targets.

**i) Energy:** Enabling micro and distributed generation infrastructure (renewable and clean) in the built environment along with international best practice standards for energy-efficiency will support the development of a sustainable and resilient region.

**j) Transport:** High quality transport planning including destination planning, with well-connected, accessible and safe cycleways and walkways, together with public transport, enabling a shift away from car dependency.

**k) E&S particularly endorses the position paper of:**

- a. The Combined Tangata Whenua Forum
- b. The Population Ageing Technical Advisory Group;
- c. The Housing Affordability Forum
- d. The Social Sector Forum; and
- e. DHB

## 5) Specific outcomes E&S is seeking:

### a) Urban Form

- i. A compact city is the primary enabler of a sustainable and low carbon future for the sub-region. To be successful a compact city must be an attractive and vibrant place to live. Active transport modes must be prioritised, with safe, accessible, protected and well-connected cycleways and walkability. The trade-offs that occur to deliver higher density must be acceptable to the community. A thoughtfully planned and well-funded approach to community engagement is vital.
- ii. The key to a compact city is great place-making together with the support of communities because they have been involved right from the beginning
- iii. To deliver a compact city, the following methods should be considered:
  - A rethink of zoning and planning policy settings is required to enable better outcomes. The following are three specific suggestions:
    - More permissive rules for intensification, including height limits, coverage, removing min requirements for access and parking.
    - Incentivising mixed use town centres
    - Tighter rules to prevent inappropriate retail developments (eg UK Town Centres First Policy)

- iv. Tauranga City Council should implement its 2006 Urban Design Strategy and better promote TCC's 2008 Urban Design Guidelines, focusing on diversity, density and public amenity. These are under-utilised existing resources.
- v. There are a range of non-rule based approaches that Council should investigate further, including:
  - Making the consenting process much simpler for intensification projects
  - Councils investing in and enhancing 'town centre' areas to make them sustainable and attractive places to live.
  - Acquire and amalgamate land in order to build exemplar projects and address 'land contiguity problems' and thereby enable key strategic developments to proceed
  - A range of other approaches that are outlined in the Udale Report to SmartGrowth and a further report from TCC by Michael Tucker
  - Apply ecological design processes to urban and bioregional planning e.g. permaculture design
- vi. Develop a robust, multi-criteria decision making process (such as ecosystem services) to assist in guiding land use decisions.
- vii. ES evaluations are undertaken to inform decision making at the appropriate planning stage
- viii. Encourage the use of Green Infrastructure (GI) for stormwater management in public and private development where stormwater infrastructure is to be vested in / managed by council
- ix. GI is recognised as an asset which is maintained and improved and incorporates multipurpose use where possible.

#### **b) Coastal Environments**

- i. Planning exercises designed to cater for an increasing number of people should treat the coastal dune system as a highly protected resource. This approach is anchored in the Regional Policy Statement. SmartGrowth should support this policy approach.
- ii. Support the protection of marine resources e.g. more marine reserves.
- iii. Protection of natural view shafts.
- iv. Protect access to, and use of regionally significant surf breaks as identified in BOP regional coastal environment plan. Protection of all coastal wetland areas including Harbours.
- v. Protection of all coastal wetland areas including Harbours.
- vi. Provide for public use and amenities within this protected resource

#### **c) Ecological corridors, Biodiversity and Water Bodies**

- i. The development of a region-wide strategy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity and natural ecosystems and the services they provide.
- ii. Provision of ecological corridors
- iii. Communities empowered and supported to be the stewards of their environment.

#### **d) Productive Land and Food Security**

- i. High-quality soils around the urban periphery are protected, especially in Pyes Pa, so they can be used for food production into the future.
- ii. Community gardens, fruit trees on public land, school gardens and other measures are actively supported to improve food security and resilience throughout the city
- iii. Agricultural and horticultural practices actively protect and regenerate soil quality, water quality, air quality and biodiversity. These practices enable economic and environmental prosperity, while ensuring regional food security.

#### **e) Water**

Water is our greatest natural asset. Our lakes, rivers and wetlands are outstanding features of our landscape. Our water assets support and sustain our unique indigenous biodiversity. Water has immense environmental, social and economic value. Water and waterbodies are of particular significance to Maori for cultural, heritage and life-giving reasons.

The quality of our water is degrading and water quantity is under significant pressure. As a goal all water bodies should be of swimmable quality and where quality is compromised it needs to be restored over time.

The following actions should be implemented;

- i. That the entire ecosystem health of each of our water bodies is mapped and where compromised is restored over time.
- ii. That where water is taken to supply social and economic needs, resource consent ensures that the water body ecosystem is not compromised and is sufficient to preserve whole ecosystem health.
- iii. That where cities, towns and new communities are developed water conservation and efficient water use are part of the development planning together with the taking of water from rich areas to enable water in other areas to be used for productive purposes e.g. food
- iv. That continuing education is provided to all communities about the value of water as a resource and its value in our ecosystems.
- v. That the cultural values of water and water bodies to Tangata Whenua is acknowledged and provided for.
- vi. That the heritage, landscape and amenity value of water bodies is recognised and protected.
- vii. That in view of climate change consideration is given to the issue of storm-water run-off in the degradation of water bodies and the potential to treat storm-water as a resource.
- viii. That SmartGrowth acknowledges the work, research and community contributions to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Fresh Water Futures projects and submits in due course to the BOP Regional on the recommendations for the water bodies in the Western Bay of Plenty.

#### **f) Air**

- i. Use of international best practice guidelines in the banning or recapture of methyl bromide.

- ii. Use of international best practice guidelines, based on peer reviewed scientific papers, to assess the usage of agrichemicals accordingly and prioritize potential health impacts when determining weed control policies and processes.

#### **g) Climate Change**

- I. Full implementation of the Local Government Leaders Climate Change Declaration.
- II. Greenhouse gas baseline and reduction targets are established.
- III. Develop and promote an action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- IV. Climate change risks and vulnerabilities are assessed for the region and adaptation plans developed.
- V. Climate change implications are considered in all coastal development and flood plain planning.

#### **h) Resource Use, Resource Recovery and Waste Minimisation**

- i. Detail is developed on how the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 and the Bay of Plenty Waste and Resource Efficiency Strategy will be incorporated.
- ii. More efficient use of resources is prioritised in procurement processes.
- iii. Aspirational targets are set for increasing resource recovery and recycling, and diversion of waste from landfill.
- iv. A strategy for diverting construction and demolition waste along with targets is developed, including e-waste
- v. A strategy and targets for diverting organic waste (food and green waste) waste are developed. Currently this accounts for 45% of all domestic waste to landfill (across the BOP). This is the most harmful waste, as it generates GHG's as it rots underground.
- vi. A strategy for managing dumping and burning of farm waste along with targets is developed
- vii. A strategy for managing and disposal of 3D waste is developed

#### **i) Energy**

- i. Standard of new builds is raised to focus on energy & resource efficiency, orientation, local materials, passive heating/cooling, and thermal envelope performance (etc) as per international best practice.
- ii. Resilience and energy achieved through clean and renewable generation as well as micro and community generation is recognised as best practice and is enabled and encouraged.
- iii. LED street lighting and other new lighting technologies are evaluated to the latest international best practice, weighing up all costs and benefits, including energy efficiency. Any new street lighting to be low correlated colour temperature (CCT) to avoid adverse impacts on human, animal and bird populations and unduly brightening night skies.
- iv. Healthy Homes retrofitting for existing houses is supported by Council initiatives.

- v. Use of LED street lighting and other new lighting technologies should consider potential impacts on community health and wellbeing e.g. solar.
- vi. Industrial sector required to develop policies for moving to low energy low polluting systems

**j) Transport**

- i. Electric vehicles and non-fossil fuel forms of transport are actively supported.
- ii. Increase the proportion of total freight volume which is transported by rail.
- iii. Targets set for cycling and walking to increase their share of total travel movements every year, and matching targets set for reduction in private passenger vehicle trips as percentage of total journeys
- iv. Targets set for patronage on public transport to increase their share of total travel movements every year, and matching targets set for reduction in private passenger vehicle trips as percentage of total journeys.
- v. Public transport modes link effectively with active transport and are supported by the appropriate infrastructure e.g. user-friendly fares, bike racks on buses, park and ride facilities and accessible bike storage areas
- vi. Promote and encourage shared transport options

**7. The E&S Forum expects to see:**

The following deliverables in order be a liveable, vibrant, adaptive city:

<b>Transport / Mobility Infrastructure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-connected accessible and safe cycle-ways and walkways enabling a shift away from car dependency</li> <li>• Pathways (walk and cycle) which facilitate both commuting and recreation</li> <li>• Greater use of electric cars and non-fossil fuels</li> <li>• Attractive public transport options</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Areas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed use town centres</li> </ul>
<b>Green/Recreational Infrastructure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to clean, natural waterbodies and safe neighbourhood green spaces for informal recreation and greenways.</li> <li>• Multiple use of green infrastructure.</li> <li>• Ecological corridors and biodiversity are actively preserved.</li> <li>• Communities empowered and supported to be the stewards of their environments</li> <li>• More and better protected marine reserves</li> <li>• Natural view shafts towards the land preserved</li> <li>• Surf breaks protected</li> </ul>
<b>Health &amp; Well-being</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trees in streets, commercial areas and reserves.</li> <li>• Prioritise the health concerns related to agrichemical use</li> <li>• Full capture or banning of Methyl bromide.</li> <li>• Active transport networks</li> </ul>

