**POSITION PAPER**

**SmartGrowth Social Sector Forum**

**July 2016**

## 1. Purpose

To present the position statement of the SmartGrowth Social Sector Forum (SSF) when considering settlement planning process and principles within the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

## 2. Introduction

According to the Governance & Advisory Forums Terms of Reference (2013), the SSF will:

- Provide a view that reflects the interests of community and social groups across the wider BOP; and

- Enable direct social sector industry participation in strategy implementation and monitoring in order to provide vital sector input into a wide range of challenges faced in the sub-region, including specific input into:

  - Building the community;

  - Housing affordability; and

  - The contribution of the social sector to economic growth.

The overarching principle of social equity is the active lens through which all the points contained in this paper need first be viewed. Social equity implies fair access to livelihood, education, and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs.

## 3. Key Current Social Concerns

**(i)** To enable liveable, equitable, life-time communities it is vital that a focus on people and meaningful engagement of communities are at the heart of urban planning and development. Building communities *now* that provide for current and future generations must be a priority. Factors such as climate change need to be considered alongside an ageing population and changes in population composition, including ethnic diversity.

**(ii)** Central and local government, and community must demonstrate courageous leadership and innovation to meet current and future challenges. Recognition of communities as co-designers in planning and development is essential in successful place-making. The SSF, HAF and SPF can offer their support to Councils in taking such leadership and involving communities.

**(iii)** Fundamentally, the underlying systemic causes of homelessness including income disparity and lack of affordable living must be addressed and sustainable solutions found.

**(iv)** Housing issues are of primary concern, specifically housing affordability and availability, proximity to place of employment, and inequitable access to housing. To meet the needs of current and projected future population changes, provision of a wide range and choice of housing typology is required.

**(v)** There is an under-investment in the social and physical infrastructure in the CBD and the wider city. Planning needs to incorporate physical infrastructure that raises inclusive social amenity. Increased social amenity leads to community engagement and assists in creating unique community identity. Community engagement is essential when planning and delivering social infrastructure.

## 4. Position statements

The position of the SSF is that:

**(i)** In order to have a just and equitable society, the **overall well-being of all people who live in our communities is paramount in planning.**

**(ii)** **Fit for purpose housing** solutions are integral to all other social issues. It must therefore be the primary focus of concern and investment. Affordable, warm and safe housing is a fundamental right: without it, most other social investment is compromised.

**(iii)** In the interests of empowering residents as partners in the planning process, **stronger accountability for community-led decisions** is required. Our position is that there should be no gap between SmartGrowth's planning procedures, their implementation and their monitoring.

**(iv)** It is essential that a quality of life is affordable for all. High quality social infrastructure and community amenity needs to be planned and delivered to counter the current under-investment in this area. Inclusive and diverse lifetime neighbourhoods are those that, through the application of good community planning and urban design principles, are designed to:

   a. Be socially and physically well-connected (i.e. diversity in residents, community spaces, allows for community decision making);

   b. Offer healthy and efficient housing (warm, dry, low running costs);

   c. Offer a sense of privacy;

   d. Promote accessibility and proximity to necessary amenities (shops, money machines, health services etc.) by foot, bicycle or public transport;

   e. Provide its inhabitants with access to and enjoyment of open space and the natural environment;

f. Actively recognise Tangata Whenua aspirations and encourage connectedness with the past, with the cultural and biological heritage of city-dwellers and with other groups and individuals;

g. Enable both communities of interest and physical communities to express their individuality and identity and that are strong, mutually supportive and non-exploitative community;

h. Ensure a clean, safe physical environment of high quality, including housing quality that creates a high health status;

i. Meet the basic needs (for food, water, shelter, income, safety and work) for all people;

j. Create an ecosystem that is stable now and sustainable in the long-term; and

k. Have a high degree of participation and control by the public over the decisions affecting their lives, health and wellbeing.

**(v)** The settlement pattern outcomes need to contain provision for a choice of housing types in order to develop liveable lifelong communities that have a socially positive impact. The Compact City approach is strongly supported to create a sustainable city. It is important that the costs and benefits analysis of intensification also includes the opportunity costs and benefits and the mounting environmental and social costs of inaction. Greenfield development needs to be as compact as possible whilst allowing for housing choice. The social return on investment needs to be taken into account in the planning and delivery of accessible social infrastructure.

**(vi)** A particular focus on the further development of amenities in established communities is required as this will be the key, with great community engagement, to making a liveable compact city.

**(vii)** Structure plans need to give social infrastructure as much importance as roads, water, sewerage and other physical infrastructure. An increased focus on social infrastructure returns both social and economic benefits.

**(viii)** The SSF particularly endorses the position papers of:

a. The Population Ageing Technical Advisory Group;

b. The Housing Affordability Forum; and

c. The Environment and Sustainability Forum.

d. Strategic Partners

e. Combined Tangata Whenua

## 4. Specific outcomes sought by SSF:

**(i)** Immediate action responding to current needs as identified by local communities, as well as planning for the future.

**(ii)** A clear demonstrable focus on **social infrastructure** as the primary consideration in urban planning and development. This requires the active application of ways and means of measurement of, and accounting for, the Social Return on Investment (SROI) for social infrastructure. Local government could incentivise developers to provide social infrastructure in the same manner that roads and other physical infrastructure are created by developers and then vested back in local government.

**(iii)** In order for **communities to be inclusive, adaptive and liveable**, to support ageing-in-place, planning and development needs to fully embrace and apply the following principles:

    a. **Inclusive community and resident-led planning and development practices** that fully engage communities and reflect their local characteristics. Along with equity of amenity, we want individuality and identity in different urban areas;

    b. Urban **design and place-making;**

    c. **Universal housing design;**

    d. **Life-time community planning;**

    e. **Excellent access to walkways, cycle-ways and public transport and**

    f. **Evidenced-based** (including social wellbeing analysis) policy and action.

**(iv)** **Access** to affordable housing is a fundamental principle of sustainable place-making leading to stable, healthy communities with a greater sense of identity and belonging, connectedness and wellbeing.

**(v)** **It is essential that research and analysis frameworks, in particular on Compact Cities, include:**

    a. Life-time neighbourhood development;

    b. Measures for accountability against the plan such as social return on investment;

    c. Analysis of the cost of opportunities and social and economic costs and risks of inaction;

    d. Local government focus on community aspirations rather than private enterprise and system requirements;

    e. Community cost-effectiveness and affordability; and

    f. Benefits and costs of intensification including evidence based on input from communities and with respect to the four well-beings.

**(vi)** It is imperative that the approach to the **delivery of intensification**:

    a. Includes community supported courageous leadership and engagement;

    b. Be based on strong evidence established through community input and on the four well-beings;

c. Includes greenfield development balanced with investment in, and further development of, existing urban social infrastructure and amenities.  Both efforts to involve targets set in consultation with the community; and

d. Incorporates innovative housing typology that accommodates and reflects population ageing changing demographics and ethnic composition.

**(vii)** Commitment from members of SGIC for long-term, firm **master planning** which is community-led (specifically overlaying social and environmental outcomes).

**(viii)** Taking initiatives to use community-held funds to provide for immediate social amenity needs and future-proofing.

**(ix)** Utilisation of the "Internet of Things" to enable safety, connection and efficiencies in home environments and the social sector without compromising civil liberties.

## 5. The SSF expects to see:

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

| **Transport / Mobility Infrastructure** |
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| • Walkable neighbourhoods for good connectivity. <br> • Utilisation of public transport nodes linked to, and between, neighbourhoods. <br> • Pathways (walk and cycle) which facilitate both commuting and recreation. |

| **Commercial Areas** |
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| • Pedestrian environments are carefully planned including "bumping spaces". <br> • Universal design principles are applied to hubs around centres or communities. <br> • Focus on safety and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. <br> • Buildings have the following features: lifts, ramps, adequate signage, non-slip flooring, rest areas and adequate quality and quantity of seating. |

| **Cultural Buildings / Spaces** |
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| • Access to culture - heritage and memory - affordable, easy and specific to geographical communities. <br> • Spaces that are engaging, celebratory facilitate active ageing and reflect our cultural diversity. <br> • Accessibility of events and activities: timing of events, location and affordability. <br> • There is celebration (both architecturally and in the streetscape) in public spaces of our unique Maori heritage . |

| **Recreation Infrastructure** |
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| • Invest equitably for people of all ages and abilities. <br> • Include some facilities and fun places for animals. <br> • Access to clean, natural waterbodies and safe neighbourhood green spaces for informal recreation and greenways. <br> • Multiple use of green infrastructure. <br> • Libraries, community centres, sports grounds. |

| **Health & Well-being** |
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| • Trees in streets, commercial areas and reserves. <br> • Safe homes, footpaths, cycle-ways, natural environment. |

- Universal design as an enabler for participation and social connectivity
- Health and well-being centres that are accessible and local.
- Fewer liquor and gambling outlets.
- Community facilities that enable access to social care services.

**Digital Infrastructure**

- Co-located infrastructure, accessible and affordable services enabling digital connectivity.
- Free wi-fi in public places, libraries and community centres.
- Utilisation of the Internet of Things to enable safety, connection and efficiencies.

**Housing and Neighbourhoods**

- "Ageing in place" is enabled as a priority focus
- Neighbourhood connections that are more than geographical (ie. Between different segments of the community)
- Variety of housing types and price ranges.
- Urban development plans – must have impact on housing and affordable housing.
- Need intensification to happen – housing diversity.

**Infrastructure for Resilience**

- Empowerment of local food production.
- Lifelines for lifetime neighbourhoods: those infrastructural elements essential to sustain life (e.g.affordable food supply line, heating or fuel, water)
- Access to lifelong education.
- Must provide for the people so that they can live in communities with opportunity. Not sure
- Social infrastructure that provides refuge in civil emergency situations.
- Public access to free potable water.
- Local/community energy supply.
- Align to the four R's of Civil Defence: Reduce risk, Readiness, Response and Recovery.

## 6. Identified barriers

- What is the definition of the "value proposition" referred to at various points in the Udale report?  Without a clear statement of its components, the functions of a dedicated Compact City team at TCC (which this Forum supports) could be compromised.
- Homogenisation – the 'one size fits all' approach. Rapid ageing requires specific and urgent focus
- Not really believing that the strength of communities and their engagement as enabling partners is the key to the acceptance and eventual success of the compact city.
- Too-narrow focus on commercialisation and the underlying assumption that the market will provide. The costs in terms of social, environmental and cultural impact need to be fully realised and understood.

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