

SmartGrowth Strategic Partners Forum (SPF)

July 2016

1. Purpose

To present the position statement of SmartGrowth Strategic Partners Forum (SPF) regarding the requirements when considering accommodating growth within the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.

2. Introduction

The Strategic Partners Forum (SPF) was established by the SGIC at the inception of SmartGrowth. It maintains a broad overview and draws on diverse expertise to:

- Act in a community audit role
- Provide a monitoring function to ensure the strategy and actions are met with input from partners forum members
- Act as a knowledge pool to the SGIC and to assist guiding decisions relating to implementation. The basis of the role is that the Strategic Partners are able to provide support to the SmartGrowth Governance structure in a collaborative fashion rather than in a strict auditing and monitoring role.
- Provide sound community governance advice to the SGIC and identify potential solutions to issues.
- In this paper the SPF provides an overview of some of the common themes that emerged from the position papers of the other fora.
- Fundamentally, there is a need for more integrated, holistic planning. The complex relationships that exist between the physical, natural and social environments need to be explored when planning and delivering urban, community or environmental solutions. It is imperative that hard infrastructure, social infrastructure and green infrastructure be considered equally when planning and when assessing the relative impacts of solutions or development on each. Social return on investments can be routinely factored into decision-making. Recognition is required of the Western Bay of Plenty and its situation in the wider region, upper North Island and nationally.

1. Themes common across SSF, HAF, SPF, PATAG, SIP and E&S:

- a. There is an under-investment in **social infrastructure**. It is vital that social infrastructure keeps pace with the changing demographic needs along with other essential infrastructure, to both attract and retain people to the western Bay. The four well-beings need to have equal value and deserve equal and ongoing consideration. There is a need to investment equally in hard and social infrastructure. A long-term commitment to social infrastructure provision in communities and society is required.
- b. Social and green infrastructure are **essential** ingredients in successful intensification and need to be delivered in parallel.
- c. It is vital that **community** be recognised as **equal partners** in planning and development and for its ability to support intensification and the development of healthy communities. Active engagement and community led planning are essential for long term sustainability and lifetime neighbourhoods. As such, community needs would be the primary driver for amenity provision
- d. Housing that is **affordable**, geographically accessible, warm and safe is a fundamental right: without it, most other social investment is compromised. Affordable housing includes ongoing costs as well as affordability to purchase or rent.

Property developers would benefit from exposure to new and existing models of housing development that deliver on social and environmental wellbeing.

- e. Services and facilities need to be **accessible** in relation to both proximity and affordability. Physical access to recreational and natural spaces and application of universal design to commercial buildings, housing and public spaces is required. Participation in recreation and the natural environment needs to be affordable for all.
- f. **Transport** not only facilitates connectedness within and between neighbourhoods and towns Bay –wide, but also reduces car dependency. An increase in well-connected and safe cycleways and walkways enable a shift away from car dependency and promotes better health outcomes. The provision of transport needs to include destination planning and affordable public transport.
- g. In all planning at whatever level, the four arms of **civil defence** need to be provided for; Reduce risk, readiness, response, recovery.
- h. **Climate change**. This is a urgent and major issue for the future. To address the increasing impacts of greenhouse gas emissions, full implementation of the Local Government Leaders Climate Change Declaration is required. A greenhouse gas reduction target needs to be developed, along with an action plan to reduce emissions. As temperatures rise it will be essential to plant many more street trees for shade and to clean and add oxygen to the air. This will be more important with an older population where the major leisure activity is walking.
- i. **Productive land** is versatile land that can be used for a wide range of productive purposes. It is vital that land of this type is protected so that we can continue to grow locally produced food for our everyday needs (food

security) and supply markets overseas as well. **Versatile soils** are our greatest asset and deserve protection and enhancement.

- j. **Water** is our most vital resource. It is probably also our least valued resource as it is so often taken for granted. The issue of water allocation (or over-allocation) is important as is the issue of ensuring that full ecosystem health is preserved in our waterbodies. Balancing these two issues needs to be built from an evidential base that gives a sustainable ecosystem first priority. The issue of water quality for streams, rivers and aquifers has an additional focus because of the new water quality requirement for exports into Europe in particular.
- k. Our **coast and marine resources** need to be protected. In order to manage climate change and sea level rise development needs to be kept well back from the coastal dune systems enabling it to be fully protected. That our climate is undergoing change is already obvious so preparing for sea level rise needs to be built into forward planning including storm surges, king tides etc. The establishment of more marine reserves would serve to protect and augment marine species and provide for recreational use for people.
- l. The **infrastructure for kiwifruit industry** growth is lacking. There is a need to ensure people can live where they work and a need for seasonal accommodation.
- m. A **range of housing options** needs be provided that ensure retention of individual town character and identity.
- n. Greater range of **housing options for older people** than those provided by the private sector (retirement villages, homes etc). More community provision of housing and facilities for mature, older and older-old people is required.

2. Areas of Special Focus

- a. We live in an area that is rich in culture and in history, both of which can be reflected in our towns and cities and in our planning especially in social infrastructure e.g. open space, buildings e.g. library and museum and public art.
 - i. **Heritage:** We have an obligation to the next generation to safeguard the stories and heritage of the region. Public investment in heritage is a core lever for economic growth, social impact and philanthropic support, and the multiplier effect is strong and well evidenced.
 - ii. **Culture:** Strong cultural infrastructure is an integral part of creating a high-income economy in Tauranga and the wider Bay of Plenty region. It is particularly important to allow for the expression of Maori art and culture as such visibility assists in the public engagement with cultural diversity. Our increasing multicultural communities can also be more visibly expressed. Facilities such as museums tend to stimulate further investment in complementary activities in the vicinity. Museums also

