

Unitary Plan Hearing Panel Presentation – 26 April 2016

PRESENTATION BY THE AUCKLAND REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON TOPIC 81 OF THE PROPOSED AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN – RE-ZONING AND PRECINCTS

INTRODUCTION

AS WE STATE IN OUR SUBMISSION, THE CHAMBER'S CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT UNITARY PLAN FROM THE OUTSET HAS BEEN AT A HIGH LEVEL FROM A CUSTOMER-LED PERSPECTIVE. WE HAVE DONE THIS IN ORDER TO ASSESS WHAT CHANGES ARE NEEDED TO RESHAPE THE DOCUMENT INTO A CREDIBLE, USER-FRIENDLY SET OF POLICIES AND RULES THAT WILL ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE AUCKLAND'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

IN MAKING YOUR FINAL DETERMINATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL WE HAVE PREPARED A CHECK LIST OF BASIC QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER.

BUT FIRST SOME CONTEXT.

OUR CURRENT PLANNING ENVIRONMENT CAN BE SUMMED UP THIS WAY:

- NOT ENOUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING,
- INSUFFICIENT 'READY' AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE LAND FOR INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,
- TOO MUCH REGULATION
- A LACK OF JOINED UP THINKING AND INTEGRATED PROCESS
- CONTINUED CONFUSION ARISING FROM THE PLANNING SYSTEMS INHERITED FROM THE SEVEN FORMER COUNCILS

PLANNING FOR OUR RAPID GROWTH IS HAPPENING IN A FRUSTRATING, DISCONNECTED ENVIRONMENT.

THE 7000 PAGE DRAFT UNITARY PLAN YOU WERE GIVEN IN 2013 TO REVIEW GAVE LITTLE CONFIDENCE OF MOVING AUCKLAND PAST THESE ROAD BLOCKS.

IT WAS OVERLY COMPLEX, IT SEEMED DESIGNED TO BE A TOOL MAINLY FOR OFFICIALS TO USE TO 'CONTROL AND REGULATE' AUCKLAND'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE ACID TEST OF YOUR WORK OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS WILL BE TO WHAT EXTENT THE UNITARY PLAN YOU RECOMMEND WILL BE FIT FOR PURPOSE AND USER FRIENDLY:

- WILL IT BE A DOCUMENT THAT PROVIDES FLEXIBLE OVERSIGHT FOR A DYNAMIC, DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT - A PROGRESSIVE, OUTWARD-LOOKING CITY?
- WILL IT BE A DOCUMENT THAT WILL BE AN INVITATION FOR PEOPLE TO BRING THEIR BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT HERE, AND ENCOURAGE AUCKLANDERS TO CONTINUE

TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN AUCKLAND AS AN ATTRACTIVE, AFFORDABLE PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK?

- WILL IT BE A DOCUMENT THAT REFLECTS A CITY TO WHICH PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO BECAUSE THEY HAVE A CHOICE – APARTMENT, SINGLE DWELLING, LIFESTYLE BLOCK, ‘LEAFY’ OR GREEN SPACE AROUND THEIR HOUSE OR A SEA VIEW – AND THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT FIT AROUND THEIR LIFESTYLE CHOICE?

CHECK LIST FOR THE PANEL:

WHEN YOU REVIEW YOUR DOCUMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO ASK:

1. **ARE THE MANY RULES IN THE DRAFT NECESSARY?** FOR EXAMPLE INSTEAD OF A RULE-CENTRIC DOCUMENT WOULD WE BETTER TO GUIDE AUCKLAND’S PLANNING THROUGH SETTING CLEAR POLICY DIRECTIVES?
 - IN OTHER WORDS IF A RULE IS NEEDED, IS IT WRITTEN IN CLEAR LANGUAGE (AND NOT JUST LEGAL JARGON)?
 - IS THERE RHETORIC THAT CAN BE ELIMINATED?
2. **HAVE WE ZONED ENOUGH LAND?** – FOR HOUSING, FOR INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS, FOR RECREATION, GREEN SPACE AND PROTECTING/ ENABLING STRATEGIC ASSETS.
 - ZONES ARE DISTINCT AND CLEAR, AND ARE BEING USED TO IDENTIFY HOUSING AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS.
 - ZONING IS A USEFUL TOOL TO PROTECT RURAL PRODUCTIVE LAND AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS.
 - ZONING CAN ALSO HELP THE SETTING ASIDE OF GREEN SPACES AND RECREATION OR PARKLAND AREAS.

THE CHAMBER’S FURTHER SUBMISSION IN 2014 REINFORCED THE NEED FOR ENABLING POLICIES FOR GUIDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESSES AND STRATEGIC ENTITIES SUCH AS AUCKLAND AIRPORT AND PORTS OF AUCKLAND.

- WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO IDENTIFY ZONES (OR PRECINCTS) OF SUFFICIENT SIZE AND SUPPORTING POLICIES SO THAT OUR AIR AND SEA PORTS ARE ABLE TO GROW AND MEET THE DEMANDS OF AUCKLAND’S CUSTOMERS, RECOGNISING THEIR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ROLE.

IN SHORT, WOULD A ZONING APPROACH GIVE GREATER CERTAINTY AND CHOICE TO CUSTOMERS IN PLANNING AUCKLAND’S GROWTH THAN WE ARE GETTING FROM THE CURRENT ‘RUB’-BASED SYSTEM?

3. WE THEREFORE ENCOURAGE YOU TO ASK: **HAVE YOU BEEN SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE WITH THE RURAL-URBAN BOUNDARY – THE RUB? HAVE THE TOUGH QUESTIONS BEEN ASKED AS TO THE USEFULNESS OF THE RUB?**

AFTER 20 YEARS OF FIRST A MUL (METROPOLITAN URBAN LIMIT) AND NOW RUB, MANY SAY THAT HAVING A FIXED URBAN LIMIT CONTROLLED BY COUNCIL HAS CONTRIBUTED TO AUCKLAND'S HIGH LAND PRICES COMPARED TO OTHER CITIES.

- IF YOU HAVE EVIDENCE FOR THIS, IT WOULD SEEM TO REINFORCE WHY THE RUB SHOULD BE A SOFTER, LESS PRESCRIPTIVE MODEL THAT IS SET AS A DISTRICT PLAN RULE.
- OTHER EVIDENCE REINFORCES THAT LIKE IT OUR NOT, AUCKLAND IS A MARKET-LED ECONOMY; AND IT IS THE MARKET THAT IS DICTATING THE PACE AND SCOPE OF AUCKLAND'S DEVELOPMENT – NOT THE PLANNING REGIME.
- WE ARE A CITY THAT IS GROWING 'UPWARDS' AND 'OUTWARDS' – HAVING A FIXED RUB IS FAILING AS AN EFFECTIVE PLANNING TOOL TO PREVENT URBAN GROWTH OUTSIDE THE 'FENCE'.
- IF WE ARE TO HAVE A RUB, SETTING IT AS A DISTRICT PLAN POLICY, WOULD MEAN IT WOULD BE CONTESTABLE AND ABLE TO BE CHALLENGED AS TO ITS USEFULNESS AS AUCKLAND GROWS.

4. **WILL OUR PLAN PUT AN END TO SILO PLANNING?**

- ARE THE PLAN'S POLICIES AND RULES SUFFICIENTLY ROBUST AND CLEAR TO ENSURE INFRASTRUCTURE AND URBAN PLANNING CAN OCCUR IN SYMPATHY WITH EACH OTHER FROM THE START OF A PARTICULAR DEVELOPMENT?

IT IS VERY OBVIOUS THAT MANY RECENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS HAVE PROCEEDED WITHOUT ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO PROVISION OF SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING RECREATION AREAS, ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, INADEQUATE ROADING & PARKING AND CONVENIENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES.

LIKEWISE, THERE ARE EXAMPLES OF RAPIDLY GROWING COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS AREAS WHOSE PROGRESS IS FRUSTRATED BY LAYERS OF REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AT ONE EXTREME AND, ONCE ESTABLISHED, THE DIFFICULTIES OF RECRUITING A SUITABLE WORKFORCE BECAUSE THE LACK OF EASY ACCESS FROM RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

OUR SUBMISSIONS ADVOCATE FOR A PLAN THAT ENABLES HOUSING, COMMERCIAL AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITY NETWORKS - TRANSPORT, WATER SERVICES, ENERGY ETC. - TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT AND THROUGH ALL PLANNING STAGES OF A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, NOT AS AN ADD-ON.

FINALLY

THE ASPIRATION OF BUSINESS IS FOR A NEW FUTURE-FOCUSED, UNIFIED PLANNING PROCESS:

- TO REFLECT A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY COUNCIL, AND EASY TO DO BUSINESS WITH
- TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESS TO DO WHAT IT IS GOOD AT – AND NOT HOLD BUSINESS BACK.
- A CREDIBLE, USER-FRIENDLY DOCUMENT THAT WILL ENABLE AUCKLAND'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.

SO AS YOU FINALISE YOUR WORK WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO ASK:

- 5. HAVE YOU COME UP WITH A PACKAGE OF POLICIES AND RULES THAT WILL ENSURE THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AUCKLAND IS ROBUST, PROGRESSIVE AND DONE IN A WAY THAT IS FAIR TO ALL?**
 - WILL AUCKLANDERS SEE OUR PLAN AS HELPING AND ENCOURAGING AUCKLAND TO MOVE FORWARD?
- 6. HAS THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF AUCKLAND COUNCIL (AND OTHER REGULATORY BODIES) TO GIVE EFFECT TO AUCKLAND'S DEVELOPMENT BEEN SUFFICIENTLY HIGHLIGHTED AND MADE CLEAR TO THEM?**

IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF THE COUNCIL DECIDES TO RELITIGATE OR CHERRY PICK WHAT YOU RECOMMEND.

IF THEY DO THIS TO YOUR DETAILED WORK AND DELIBERATIONS, WHAT CONFIDENCE CAN THERE BE IN WHAT THE COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE TO DO INTO THE FUTURE?

AUCKLAND WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THE CERTAINTY IT BADLY NEEDS.

THE AUTHORITY, RESEARCH AND INDEPENDENCE OF YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS SHOULD STAND AS THE FINAL WORD. SO AUCKLAND CAN GET ON WITH DELIVERING THE BADLY NEEDED ACTION ON OUR CRITICAL ISSUES.... WITH CONFIDENCE AND CERTAINTY.

(ENDS)