

Supplementary Submission to Royal Commission
Prepared by Joel Cayford – Independent Auckland Regional Councillor
Ph: 445 2763 Cell: 0274 978 123 Email: joel.cayford@arc.govt.nz
Dated 20th April 2008



1 Introduction

My main submission is dated 7th April and was submitted about that time.

This supplementary submission fills some gaps that were in my original submission and adds a couple of points. The primary emphasis of this supplementary submission is concerned with funding, partnerships and mechanisms for ensuring that the Growth Strategy and Compact City Form ideas are implemented.

The Auckland Governance arrangement that I am advocating for is a variant of “Option 3” - one of the five options for changes to Auckland’s governance arrangements described and analysed in ARC’s submission to the Royal Commission. These five options are:

Option 1: Status Quo

Option 2: Three unitary councils. Three city councils that cover the whole Auckland region, supported at local level by Community Boards. These councils would jointly own several Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs) for transport, water, economic development and regional planning.

Option 3: Strengthened regional council with seven TLAs and a series of community boards.

This option is distinguished from the status quo: by a clear sense of hierarchy in the RMA and regional decision-making; strengthened roles and transfer of assets and responsibilities to the regional council in areas such as property development, arterial roads, economic development and regional facilities. The regional council would be responsible for bulk water and wastewater. TLAs would retail water and wastewater and manage stormwater assets, administer locally focussed projects such as town centre development and local roads, community and cultural facilities, and environmental education....

Option 4: Strengthened regional council with three TLAs and a series of community boards.

There are variations of this model – possibly having 4 TLAs. The model would look similar to Option 3, with the major difference being amalgamation of some existing TLAs into larger entities.

Option 5: Single unitary authority with community councils. The United Auckland Authority (UAA) would combine many of the responsibilities of present TLAs and the ARC. It would be responsible for preparing the Regional Policy Statement (RPS), regional plans and all district plans, and for issuing consents under these plans. Community Councils (CCs) would develop community plans. These CCs would take responsibility for local events and programmes, local safety, and environmental education, and the UAA could devolve responsibilities for management of main streets, local parks, and local recreation facilities to CCs.... Rates would be collected on a single rates bill by the UAA, which could allocate some of that funding to CCs.

The ARC is recommending an Option 5 which envisages 20 or so Community Councils that would be part of the Regional Body, subject to its policy decisions, and be funded by it. Auckland City Council supports a variant of Option 5 – but without the Community Councils - and where the present 7 TLAs are amalgamated into 4 Area Committees of the Regional Council – each with its own mayor and several locally elected councillors. Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere City Councils have recommended a version of Option 3 – with TLA representation on the Regional Council - and with Community Boards.

2 What is the Problem?

Restating the key points of my main submission: the main problems facing Auckland include that implementation of the compact city region strategic vision is failing; Auckland development needs to change direction if it is to become more sustainable and more economically efficient; regional planning needs to be strengthened, relevant infrastructure management centralised, and integrated implementation made more certain; and the planning and implementation of urban regeneration projects requires a regional Urban Development Authority, and project specific Development Agencies to coordinate master-planning and delivery.

Some argue that there is not enough funding to implement the compact city vision, and that is the main cause of the problem. However, it is estimated that central government spent \$14.4 billion in the Auckland region in the 2005 fiscal year (see ARC's submission, 22 April 2008), and that local and regional council funding in the 06/07 financial year was \$2.02 billion for operating revenue and \$967 million on capital expenditure.

In addition, I note the delivery of several significant urban regeneration projects over the past few years: North Shore Busway, New Lynn Station, and Britomart. They could have been better - as I noted in my main submission - but these projects are evidence that changes are occurring in Auckland. But we can learn from them.

Central government has already indicated its interest in investing in Auckland. Its readiness to build a waterfront stadium is clear evidence of such intent. Its continuing financial support for motorway construction is further evidence, as is its support for the rail project - even though this is somewhat reluctant.

Some argue that there is an "imbalance between mandate and financial capability" in Auckland, and that this problem must also be "fixed". These arguments usually lead to support for a single large vertically integrated

Case Study - Mayors or What?

Every big city in the world that I am aware of has a mayor who is elected at large. While that reality raises the question of what sort of person could afford the campaign, I believe on balance the public want to be able to elect a city mayor. In my view Auckland has neither the maturity nor the reason to have an executive mayor - ie one who has the executive powers of a Ken Livingstone - I believe Auckland would benefit from a front person, a civic figure-head, a regional spokesperson who has the greatest support.

This person would chair the Greater Auckland Council, and would be elected at large. It is not essential for that mayor to have a majority on council for his or her program.

I note that London has 30 or so Borough Councils, with elected councillors, but no elected mayor. Instead the incoming council elects a mayor each year. This mayor must have the support of the majority of councillors, performs public functions, and chairs full council meetings. In my opinion this would be an appropriate change to make to Auckland's Area Councils - ie North Shore, Manukau, Auckland and Waitakere City Councils would become North Shore, Manukau, Auckland and Waitakere Area or District Councils - and would appoint their own mayors.

This change would underline the structural change in power relationships across the region. It would mean there would be only one mayoral election for the Auckland Region.

Case Study - Boundaries matter

One of the most irritating features of the RMA has been the line that is drawn between where TLAs have jurisdiction and where Regional Councils have jurisdiction. Take the coastal environment - the beaches around North Shore City. NSCC's responsibility ends at Mean High Water Spring. ARC's responsibility begins there and includes jurisdiction over discharges into the water. And then Department of Conservation has jurisdiction over structures that are in the Coastal Marine Area (like sewer overflow pipes and stormwater structures). And then MAFF appears to have jurisdiction over the fauna and flora that grows on the rocks below Low Tide. I don't really have a solution. The same problem occurs in streams within North Shore City. North Shore City Council has jurisdiction over land use development, and is learning to adopt controls which restrict the adverse effects of stormwater runoff on land. But this stormwater eventually gets to streams, and road berms, and in big rains collects clay sediments and other fines which are then discharged to streams - often overland rather than through stormwater pipes. Waicare and stream care community groups, noting clay turbidity effects in normally clean and healthy streams, are regularly frustrated when they seek to attribute blame for regulatory failure. ARC blames NSCC, NSCC blames ARC's stormwater consents, developers blame the rain, and the streams get ruined. I mention this conundrum because the same thing would happen at the MUL - Metropolitan Urban Limit boundary - if the Regional Council's jurisdiction was to be pulled back to that line. Edge development effects over the line under the jurisdiction of another regional authority would likely unleash a round of peri-urban / life style development which would damage the rural fringe, and put at risk sustainable development.

Greater Auckland Council of some kind, where there would be an obvious and structural link between rates, mandate and financial capability. One-stop-shops have that character.

But this argument ignores the real fact that - as the data above demonstrates - that central government investment in the region far exceeds local government investment. While much of that investment is for services such as health and education, a big chunk of it subsidises the work of Auckland's TLAs and the ARC.

For example the New Lynn undergrounded railway station project is receiving more than \$100 million from central government - far more than half the capital cost. The North Shore Busway project was more than 75% funded by central government. While more than half the cost of the modernisation of Auckland's railway will be paid for by central government. (I note here that there is major concern in Auckland at the proportion of subsidy for Wellington's railway systems, compared with Auckland's - but I also note the massive extent of central government support for Auckland state highway development compared with Wellington.)

3 Partnerships

The Local Government Act 2002 provides new possibilities for local and regional councils to work in partnership with other institutions. These include central government, other councils, the private sector and communities and community organisations. It allows for public-private-partnerships, joint ventures, and other arrangements. One of the principles of the LGA is that a local authority should work collaboratively, and build relationships. Underpinning this principle is the recognition that to achieve the goal of sustainable development, relationships and partnerships will be the key.

Case study projects I have already described are examples of partnership approaches to projects. I have provided an account in my main submission about what worked well, and what could have worked better in those projects. It is important to recognise however, that in all cases, central government support and funding was essentially conditional on the quality and strength of the partnership (with all partners - business, land-owners, and local community groups), and on the credibility of the economic benefit analysis put forward in support of the project funding application.

While it might seem attractive to provide central government with a "one-stop-shop" desk in Auckland for its attention, when considering the merits of Auckland projects, such an approach ignores the imperative of obtaining local community buy-in and support of any such project, it ignores the need for land owners and business to engage with public authorities of scale and weight at city level (not regional level) and it ignores the LGA's purpose which is to maximise public participation and involvement at the appropriate level.

Central government is increasingly interested in becoming constructively engaged with Auckland regeneration projects. It's Auckland economic development office - GUEEDO - is a manifestation of that, and GUEEDO's recent report looking at cruise ship facilities and Queens Wharf opportunities is a concrete example.

Historically, central government has been happy to pour money into state highways because: there is public support for roads; it has direct control over Transit - the country's state highway authority; there is a track-record of public satisfaction with this infrastructure.

Central government's attachment to this "roads are for cars" agenda is also why local councils have found it relatively easy to win central government support (through Transfund and now Land Transport NZ) for a 50% subsidy for local roading and arterial projects if they are for general traffic.

However, that agenda is changing, and central government is increasingly, and understandably nervous about changing its transport funding policies and priorities. Among the key arguments in persuading central government to support Auckland's rail project was that all of Auckland's TLAs supported the Regional Land Transport Strategy (no dissent), and because of the associated agglomeration benefits for the local economy. These latter benefits arise from the increased intensity of economic activity arising in and around urban centres transformed by the presence of a high quality public transport service, and by the dynamism associated with an actively patronised station and other urban amenity.

However it is critical to note that the transformation of Auckland through better passenger transport systems, through compact town centre form, through Transit Oriented Design and Development, through Pedestrian Oriented Urban design and development - won't happen if it's merely seen as a regional strategy.

Auckland's Northern Boundaries

While not being familiar with the boundary issues that have been debated in the southern part of Auckland Region, I have experience and some views about the North. I would recommend as part of the future governance arrangements for Auckland, that the existing Rodney District Council be amalgamated into North Shore City Council and Waitakere City Council. An appropriate geographic boundary running North/South would divide the district into an Eastern area which shares many of the characteristics of North Shore City with its East Coast developments, along State Highway 1, sharing the Northern Busway axis which is proposed to be extended through Silverdale to Orewa. Two logical community board areas would be Orewa and Whangapaoroa Peninsula. This Area is building its own wastewater treatment plant with disposal into the Hauraki Gulf, and this would benefit from the expertise of NSCC's existing wastewater division. The Western area would include Muriwai, Huapai, Waimauku and Helensville up to South Head of Kaipara. Again, the character of this area is similar to the "Westie" culture of Waitakere, with its Piha and West Coast geography, and its coastal boundary into the Manukau Harbour shares some similarity with the southern coastline of the Kaipara Harbour. Principle planning benefits of this amalgamation would be the removal of the competitive relatively uncontrolled peri-urban development that is presently occurring the other side of the MUL in RDC. A better balance between rural and urban would be achieved through one TLA having jurisdiction across that boundary - removing unhelpful edge effects.

This transformation will occur town centre by town centre, commercial zone by commercial zone, and street by street. It will be a project by project transformation. At local level. And each project will need to be treated on its merits and according to on-the-ground specifics of the existing urban fabric, existing transport infrastructure, community hopes and aspirations, land owner expectations, heritage opportunities.

4 Institutionalised Partnership Mechanisms

I have argued that Auckland needs to move beyond its preoccupation with road transport driven development, and that it needs a Regional Development Strategy that is as much about land use, as it is about transport.

While it is heartening to see more discussion and debate about where new rail networks should be built, unless that discussion happens in concert with land use development planning and compact city form thinking, there are risks of poor outcomes with public transport systems too. For example, while Transit's proposal to use Neilson Street through Onehunga as an on/off ramp servicing SH20 and carrying 50,000+ vehicles/day would likely have destroyed the town, so too might a rushed and double-tracked airport rail line refurbishment that runs through the town. These projects need very careful attention to detail and to long term implications.

Transport projects - except state highways and some public transport projects - presently attract a 50% subsidy from central government if certain criteria are met. But there is no such funding relationship for urban regeneration projects - even though the economic benefits may be greater than roading projects. The proposed waterfront stadium was an exception. ARC recently received a refund from central government of "Project Boston" money (rail investigation work several years ago) of about \$20 million which ARC has decided to allocate as "seed money" for TLAs to get on with essential planning work in grade-separating road/rail intersections which will become problematic as passenger rail service frequencies increase - effectively shutting down certain

Retaining Auckland Region's City Councils

Brisbane and Perth are good examples of reasonably homogeneous city regions. I am reliably informed by those I know who live there, that this state of affairs is quite liked by most of the citizens. These cities are different from the diversity and difference that has grown in Sydney and Melbourne. Auckland began as a fairly homogeneous place, and its motorways have tended to enforce a degree of homogeneity across the region. But few would disagree that Manukau and Waitakere Citys have carved out a cultural niche, an urban character, a quantifiable image specific to those areas. Westie Waitakere and Pacific Manukau are growing brands and embeded urban cultures. Auckland City has always had the CBD image - city of sails - and financial and entertainment centre. North Shore City struggles a bit with its image. Sometime life-style city, 140 kilometres of coastline, and elite sports provision. My thoughts are that the Auckland region wants to maximise its diversity and interest and difference - rather than to maximise its homogeneity. To celebrate difference. That is another reason for retaining reasonably strong city/area councils - committed to building the local character and sense of place. At the very least this provides its people with a choice of places and cultures to live - this idea needs to be expanded more than just the notion of the home: apartment, semi-detached, rural idyll, coastal or quarter acre paradise. Metro cities enjoy, encourage and celebrate difference and diversity.

roads. This is an example of money being used to encourage TLAs to prioritise urban regeneration projects around road/rail intersections which are often located at or near town centres.

There are dozens of potential urban regeneration projects across Auckland Region. These would be identified and prioritised in the regional council's Regional Development Strategy. Implementation would be initiated and monitored by the Regional Council's Urban Development Authority. In partnership with the appropriate TLA, a local Development Agency would be established and representatives appointed. This DA would be managed by the TLA and build establish and build relationships with local business, landowners and community groups. Its major planning task would be the production of a Master Plan for the development project area. This would include elements for which the TLA and Regional Council had direct responsibility - such as new zonings, transport and water infrastructure - but it would also be an opportunity for the central government representative(s) to ensure that appropriate provision was made for health and education infrastructure.

Central government money for any part of the development would only be forthcoming when the whole Master Plan was signed off - including by local land owners and participating community groups.

Auckland needs to move beyond its present ad-hoc "trust us" approach to urban regeneration. The purpose of the governance institutions and mechanisms I am recommending is to bring structure to the process, and to enable the formation of partnerships between local, city level, regional and central government, and participation from local business, and local community groups.

5 Conclusion

People and communities want more real say, at local level, on what is happening to their towns and streets. Auckland needs to be able to deliver sustainable economic development projects in local streets. Urban regeneration projects will need economic development partnerships between land owners, developers, council planners, and the community at local level. As seen in successful Australian cities. Central government will need to be convinced by the quality of the planning of such projects, and the quality of associated community and business partnerships, before it commits essential funding.

Ends