



Feedback to the Otara - Papatoetoe Board on the Unitary Plan

4th June 2013

1.0 Background.

Studio D4 (SD4) have carried Unitary Plan Review and property development advice consultancy for the Manurewa, Papakura and Howick Local Boards during Sept-Nov 2012 and again in March –June 2013, since the release of the Unitary Plan draft on 15th March 2013. On the basis of this work, Carol McKenzie-Rex has requested SD4 provide similar consultancy assistance for the Mangere – Otahuhu and Otara – Papatoetoe Boards.

Auckland Council's Local Board Services Department (LBSD) is coordinating the Council's Local Board Advisors and the external consultants on the Unitary Plan Review work. On 27 May 2013, LBSD provided a brief for all external consultants (such as SD4) who are assisting the 21 Auckland Boards. Each Board area has now had external consultants appointed.

For the Auckland Plan and the Unitary Plan, SD4's area of specialist expertise is assisting Council and it's Local Boards in better understanding the property industry's likely response to the new Unitary Plan, once put in place. SD4 has assisted Council Local Boards in interpreting the new Unitary Plan's Policies and Objectives, and how the property industry will likely respond to the new Rules. SD4 has also provided Planning assistance, although this is not our core business.

Tattico Ltd are another consultancy that has been appointed by LBSD to cover approx. ½ the Board areas. Tattico's main area of expertise is strategy and policy advice, especially in Local Body Planning. To optimize service to each of the Local Board's and with LBSD's assistance, Tattico and SD4 will now "share" consultancy advice to each Board, with Tattico taking the lead coordinating role, and with SD4 focusing on providing each Board strategic property advice, and advice on various future growth scenarios.

SD4 will still complete the initial review for the Mangere – Otahuhu and Otara – Papatoetoe Boards, as provided within this document.

2.0 Initial Items to Review prior to 5th June Board Meetings.

Studio D4 (SD4) held an initial Unitary Plan Review meeting with Carol McKenzie-Rex and Neil Taylor on 23rd May. At this meeting, and follow up emails, SD4 have been asked to provide comments on the following items for the 5th June Board Workshop Sessions:

- 1. Review the Otara-Papatoetoe Unitary Plan Local Board Feedback document (File No.: CP2012/21058), dated 20 November 2012, and provide comment on whether the Recommendations provided by the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board (OPLB) has been followed within the draft Unitary Plan documents.**
- 2. Review the Unitary Plan draft for Otara-Papatoetoe and provide any relevant property development feedback, especially in relation to the viability of development chance, within the various areas.**
- 3. Where there are areas of intended growth shown, and where there are likely to be market viability difficulties, provide comments on enablers which maybe future catalysts for quality development in the desired areas.**

3.0 Review of the Otara – Papatoetoe Unitary Plan Local Board Feedback document, dated 20th November 2012.

SD4 will provide the OPLB feedback on the various points within the document provided, where they relate to specific property and planning matters:

Point 4 from the Executive Summary (of the OPLB's 20th November document)

- An Area Plan for the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board area would provide the necessary vision and strategy to inform the draft Unitary Plan, and methods to intensify residential development in ways appropriate to these communities;
- Pending completion of an Area Plan, the draft Unitary Plan should be changed to incorporate an interim approach. The interim approach will allow time to develop an Area Plan, including a vision and strategy for the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board Area; provide a more orderly transition to higher density development, better target investment in new infrastructure, and avoid unnecessary social disruption;

SD4 Comment:

Whilst an Area Plan has not been completed for Otara – Papatoetoe, there has been substantial detail provided in Planning Maps, similar to what an Area Plan would have created.

Further comments from Point 4 of the Executive Summary

- The main elements of the interim approach would be:
 - The interim zoning map would provide for intensified residential development around the centres of Old Papatoetoe and Manukau, in Terrace Housing and Apartments zones
 - All other residential zonings (including Terrace Housing and Apartments zones at Hunters Corner and Otara, and Mixed Housing Zone in all areas) would be changed to Single House Zone in the interim

- The Area Plan would review the Single House Zone, and after the Area Plan is completed, the Unitary Plan would be altered by a notified variation, to incorporate additional appropriate areas and methods for residential intensification

Point a) iv) of the Recommendation/s

- i) Until an Area Plan is developed for Otara-Papatoetoe, the Unitary Plan should take the following interim approach to avoid irreversible outcomes:
 - allow for urban intensification in areas previously zoned for intensive development, and areas that clearly fulfil the criteria of Directive 10.3 (close proximity to existing community facilities, open space, high frequency public transport centres, and business areas, etc.) This would include Terraced Housing and Apartment Zones only around Manukau Metro Centre and Old Papatoetoe, and business areas
 - Zone all other existing residential areas in the Single House Zone.

And Point 14 of the “Discussion”

14. All residential land in the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board Area has been placed into either the Terraced Housing and Apartment Buildings Zone or the Mixed Housing Zone. No land in the board area has been shown as Single House Zone or Large Lot Zone.

And Point 19 of the “Discussion”

19. The draft plan shows the remainder of the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board area in the Mixed Housing Zone. This zone allows multiple residential units on sites larger than 1500 square metres. It would mean two-story blocks of flats could appear randomly throughout existing suburbs beside single houses. This will inevitably change the amenity of these areas, to the detriment of existing residents.

SD4 Comment:

Auckland Council (AC) will not likely support a “halt” to re-zoning by effectively changing all areas to single house zone. However the 3 year notification period of the Unitary Plan, will provide substantial protection to existing households, as development will not be able to proceed in line with the new zoning, unless the specific guidelines of the new Govt – Auckland Council Housing Accord are followed. The reality is that only larger sites will use the Housing Accord process, and using this process the public will have opportunity for submission. i.e. it is not likely that medium density housing will “just pop up” over-night in areas not clearly intended for intensification.

The main Otara – Papatoetoe town centre intensification areas have been provided within the Manukau Metro Centre and Old Papatoetoe centre. The Planning Maps do now show much more single house zone area within existing residential areas. Of the residential areas, there is now approx. 35% single house zone, 55% mixed housing zone and 7-10% terrace house and apartments.

Point a) v) of the Recommendation/s

- i) That the Unitary Plan should include triggers before the additional development potential provided by the plan can be uplifted, including:

- 1) All necessary infrastructure to handle increased population (including transport, water, wastewater, and community and social infrastructure) is in place before new development, over and above existing plan provisions, is permitted.

And Point 17 of the “Discussion”

17. Hunter’s Corner and Otara seem questionable for immediate high density residential development, especially as there are doubts about whether existing infrastructure and public transport can support increased population, and whether there are sufficient public open space, schools and other community facilities.

SD4 Comment:

Auckland could not afford the \$Billions of infrastructure upgrades to be provided before any new intensified development occurs. The economic reality is that development will likely happen “at the same time” as infrastructure improvements are provided.

Whilst the 3 year Unitary Plan notification period will also restrict widespread initial development, the market economic reality is that minimal intensification is likely in the short term within the Hunter’s Corner and Otara town centres.

20. On the Residential Housing Package:
 - a. That the proposal for six residential (Terraced Housing and Apartment Building, Mixed Housing, Single House, Large Lot, Rural and Coastal) is generally supported.
 - b. That the mapping of the zones across the local board area should be reviewed. Areas of particular concern are as follows:
 - The Mixed Housing Zone should be removed, as part of the interim approach described above.
 - Some areas mapped for Terraced Housing and Apartment are outside the parameters for intensification in Auckland Plan directive 10.3 (proximity to community facilities, open space, transport centres and business areas.)
 - c. That the integration between zones needs further consideration and planning to ensure a gradual transition between zones.
 - d. That maximum building height in the Terraced Housing and Apartment building zone should be 15m in Papatōetoe, and 12m in Otara.
 - e. That the maximum height in the Mixed Housing Zone should be 8.5m.

SD4 Comments:

The six residential zoning classifications (incl terrace house and apartments) have been retained.

Planning Maps have been provided prior to an Area Plan (as SD4 comments above) and the 3 year Unitary Plan notification period will in effect provide an interim approach (also see SD4 comments above).

The OPLB should formalize its views on height and present these to a Council Workshop on 19th June (see section 5.0 below)

21. On the Business Activity Package:

- a. That the maximum building height for Manukau Metro (60m) is accepted, but large buildings need to be designed to manage wind issues at ground level.
- b. That the maximum building heights for Papatoetoe centres do not exceed 15m, and for Otara centre does not exceed 12m.
- c. That business development must ensure good urban and building design.

SD4 Comments:

As SD4 has commented on earlier, the OPLB should formalize its views on height and present these to a Council Workshop on 19th June (see section 5.0 below). Ensuring good quality urban design is provided is enshrined within the Unitary Plan. The OPLB should continue to support this.

Point 21 of the “Discussion”

21. Much of the Mixed Housing Zone in Papatoetoe is within the airport noise footprint. Five high voltage transmission lines go over the zone in Otara. Residential intensification, as indicated in the draft Unitary Plan, is difficult to reconcile with avoidance of these areas of hazards and reverse sensitivity effects. It would seem better not to intensify these areas.

SD4 Comments:

High Voltage transmission lines and airport noise flight paths should be noted as an overlay within the Unitary Plan. Specific development guidelines should be provided for these areas. The OPLB should continue to advocate for this.

Point 25 of the “Discussion”

25. A general point about the draft plan proposals is that they do not indentify any additional public open space to support a population increase. It is desirable to identify future open space now in the draft plan, as an adjunct to the intensification proposals. This will enable the land to be secured more readily when needed.

SD4 Comments:

Additional Parks and Reserves are being provided within the OPLB Area, eg the current development of new Parks and Reserves on 20-25 Hect of land by 359-383 East Tamaki Rd and behind Accent Drive. The OPLB should continue to advocate for increased Parks and Reserves, and the upgrading of existing facilities.

4.0 Review the Mangere–Otahuhu Unitary Plan Draft and provide relevant property development feedback.

SD4 provides the following feedback, in no specific order:

4.1 The Manukau Metro Centre will become increasingly market attractive for residential intensification.

SD4 Comment:

The Manukau Metro Centre's initial high rise apartments have provided a reasonably attractive amenity to the occupiers of these properties. This will likely be the catalyst for further apartment and mixed use development within the metro town centre. SD4 recommends that the OPLB continue to focus on increasing the town centre amenity of occupiers. Enhancing Manukau's position as a day and evening entertainment centre will assist with this. Safety and security for 24 hours of the day is at a relatively good level, and this needs to be maintained. The train to the metro centre is a good addition, although not the pivotal catalyst that many planners would anticipate. Strong urban design of all future developments will continue to increase the attractiveness of the Metro Centre also.

4.2 Papatoetoe Town Centre has good potential, ensure quality is maintained.

SD4 Comment:

The Papatoetoe town centre provides an attractive streetscape amenity that will be encouraging to further residential intensification. The OPLB and AC needs to ensure that it maintains a strong urban design focus on all new development activity. The next 2-3 apartment developments will be key to ensure Papatoetoe is considered an attractive location for apartment occupiers and developers. There is a lot of up-zoned terrace house and apartment land been provided, allowing a 10-20 year increase in medium density residential close to the town centre and rail station. As with the Manukau Metro Centre, providing an attractive and safe and secure town centre, 24 hours a day, will be key catalysts for residential intensification.

4.3 Otara Town Centre and Hunters Corner Town Centre development will likely be in later years of the Unitary Plan.

SD4 Comment:

The Hunters Corner and the Otara Town Centres are not serviced by train public transport and rely on bus transportation. Residential occupiers will be somewhat reliant on car transportation, which will have an impact on medium rise apartment development.

The fragmented ownership of property on the main street and where strip retail is prevalent will make site consolidation difficult, especially where the retail property use has resulted in a land and buildings value greater than what will sustain new residential apartment intensification. In other words it will cost developers high \$/m² to purchase sufficient land for an apartment development in these town centres. When combined with their relatively low market demand for residential development within the immediate town centre, intensification of these areas will likely be slow.

4.4 Most of the intensification will occur within the Mixed Housing Zone area.

SD4 Comment:

The Mangere – Otahuhu Local Boards provided the following comments in its feedback to AC in the draft Unitary Plan (Item 14):

“Mixed housing is preferred as it suits the cultural needs, different age groups, families that are large and most importantly for affordable options”.

SD4 are of the view that many parts of the Otara – Papatoetoe Board area will likely have similar issues.

SD4 strongly advocate that the design and development community assists the Otara – Papatoetoe community in providing housing typologies that address:

- the cultural needs of the various occupier groupings*
- providing housing for larger families, including extended families.*
- Providing safe, weathertight, comfortable and healthy homes for families whose priority is affordability.*

SD4 is strongly supportive of town centre intensification principles, although SD4 is of the view that the Mixed Housing zone will provide the greatest opportunity for affordable intensification for the Otara – Papatoetoe residents.

4.5 SD4’s comments on AC’s Unitary Plan 3D modeling videos, as it affects the Manukau Metro Centre

As part of the Auckland Council (AC) Capacity for Growth Study work, AC has also just released a series of Unitary Plan 3D modeling videos. Instead of the normal Council process of posting these on the Council website so that they could be clearly viewed by all, they are tucked away on “YouTube”, as below:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrOUT_OqHCg&list=PLNiuqKCzobSwwvxhdHPqawQy4GPEFW8R9

So having reviewed the video simulations for Manukau (there are none posted for other Otara – Papatoetoe town centres), SD4 provides the following comments:

- The base information provided for the 3D modeling is sound. It provides very accurate 3D building shapes of all the existing buildings in the area.*
- The 3D views are rotated across each of the town centres, the main features are marked and it is very clear to get a good context of each centre.*
- The buildings and sites of historic character are clearly signposted before the growth projections commence.*
- The manner in which under-developed sites are prioritized for redevelopment within each centre looks promising.*
- The new building massing of each of the chosen redevelopment sites appears realistic.*
- This is where the good news stops. The extent of the re-development shown in three 10 year time periods in a number of the lower socio-economic centres is totally unrealistic.*
- The AC 3D video for Manukau show 25 buildings of 12-18 storey developed in years 1-10, another 15 in years 11-20 and a total of 50+ 12-18 storey buildings developed in Manukau by year 30+. These numerical projections by AC are far too aggressive.*
- SD4 is strongly supportive of town centre residential intensification, although are of the view that AC are grossly over-estimating the likely apartment take-up in many town centres.*

4.6 Proposed Private Plan Change 35 – Puhinui Gateway from rural to Business

SD4 Comments:

SD4 are aware of the recently notified Plan Change 35, which intends to re-zone approx. 140 Hect of the Puhinui Peninsula from Rural to business.

Auckland needs a further 1,000 – 1,500 Hectares of business zoned land in the next 20-30 years, with the current shortfall causing high land prices and a loss of industry economic competitiveness. SD4 and the Property Council of NZ are strongly supportive of initiatives which increase the supply of affordable business zoned land in areas nearby substantial residential populations. SD4 are of the view that the re-zoned Puhinui land will be in a very attractive location for business and should be supported. If further land areas within the Puhinui Peninsula could be upzoned to further business land, that would add to the benefit.

5.0 Auckland Council early decisions on Heights in intensified areas

At an Auckland Council meeting attended by SD4 and other Local Board Advisory Consultants, on 27th May 2013, The Auckland Council Planning Manager Penny Pirrit, advised that Mayor Len Brown has just initiated a 19th June Workshop to discuss key issues of the UP, so that these could be dealt with “early”, in an early public announcement. The main issues centred around height within town centres and heights within the apartment / terrace zones. Specifically which areas should have which height applied?

Up until now Council Planners have provided a classification to various town centres, calling them Principal Centres, Town Centres, Neighbourhood Centres etc. Council Planners have classified each Centre and then applied the relevant height to each depending on their classification. The heights have also then been applied in a general uniform fashion across each centre, excepting height buffering at the interface to residential areas.

Penny Pirrit relayed that it was likely that Council Planners would be applying greater discretion to the application of the heights within various town centres. i.e. There maybe height variances within a centre, if there is a good reason for doing so. Some heights maybe increased, some heights may decrease.

The height in the Manukau Metro Centre is proposed at 72.5m max, or 18 storeys (Not 60m as the eralier OPLB document). There are already buildings of 18 storeys within the town centre. SD4 recommend that the 72.5m max and 18 storeys is maintained.

The height in the Papatoetoe Town Centre is proposed at 24.5m or 6 storeys. SD4 is supportive of this height, as it will allow future apartment development to be more ecomically viable. (developers can economically purchase land and generate sufficient development scale over 6 levels to make a new development viable).

The height in the Hunter Corner and Otara Town Centre is proposed at 16.5m or 4 storeys. SD4 is supportive of this height, and sees no reason to change these, especially redicing the levels which will make future re-development even more economically challenging (the relative cost of purchasing sufficient land for re-development).

It is important that the Otara - Papatoetoe Board take a view on all the proposed heights within the Local Board area, prior to the 19th June workshops. Mayor Brown intends to invite the Local Board Chairmen to this Workshop.