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## Beacon Pathway Submission to the Draft Unitary Plan for Auckland

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### What is Beacon?

Beacon Pathway Incorporated aims to transform New Zealand's homes and neighbourhoods to be high performing, adaptable, resilient and affordable. To achieve this, Beacon's work uses demonstrations and monitoring to provide proof of the benefits of improving New Zealand's housing stock.

Beacon Pathway Inc. builds on the successful research programme completed by Beacon's original consortium which developed a whole-of-house approach to improving the performance of both new and existing homes, using demonstrations and monitoring to provide proof of the benefits of improving New Zealand's housing stock. Much of this work was developed with Waitakere City Council and is available free of charge on Beacon's website [www.beaconpathway.co.nz](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz). Tools developed by Beacon include:

- Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework – a framework and tools to measure the sustainability of neighbourhoods
- HSS High Standard of Sustainability – performance benchmarks for a sustainable home which take a whole-of-house approach to improving the performance of both new and existing homes. This encompasses energy, water, indoor environment, waste, and material/product selection.
- A HomeSmart approach to assessing existing homes and developing a renovation plan – this underpins the Retrofit Your Home initiative.
- *Policy Options for Sustainable Homes: A Resource Manual for Local Government* – this provides an overview of the range of tools available to councils to encourage people to make more sustainable choices in their homes and neighbourhoods

Beacon has been working with Auckland Council over the past year, including input to the Housing Action Plan Stage 1 and in the areas of new build, retrofit and neighbourhoods. Beacon has also been working with Rodney Local Board on a housing/employment training programme being developed by Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara. Beacon welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Unitary Plan for Auckland.

Beacon's Members include: Christchurch City Council, EECA, New Zealand Steel, Fletcher Aluminium, Certified Builders, Resene and InsulPro Manufacturing. Beacon would welcome the opportunity to discuss the benefits that membership of the Society could bring Auckland Council.

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## Beacon's Perspective on the Draft Unitary Plan

Beacon congratulates Auckland Council on developing its draft Unitary Plan. Since its formation in October 2010, the Auckland Council has had the task of refining a unified vision for the city. The Unitary Plan is a critical step in delivering on Auckland's vision of *the world's most liveable city*.

Auckland is home to one third of New Zealand's population; is the country's largest commercial centre; comprises a substantial proportion of the domestic market; contributes significantly to New Zealand's imports and exports; acts as a key service centre for other parts of the country; and has a high concentration of tertiary and research institutes. For New Zealand to function well, Auckland must be all that is envisaged in *the world's most liveable city*. To do this, Beacon agrees that achieving and integrating all the following outcomes is critical.

- A fair, safe and healthy Auckland
- A green Auckland
- An Auckland of prosperity, and opportunity
- A well connected and accessible Auckland
- A beautiful Auckland that is loved by its people
- A culturally rich and creative Auckland
- A Maori identity that is Auckland's point of difference in the world.

In order to deliver on the vision, all aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> century sustainability must be addressed including housing needs, climate change, a move to a low carbon future, and improved community participation and resilience. This will require a range of innovative strategic and policy approaches, backed up by methods, actions and delivery the like of which have not been seen in Auckland before. The Auckland Plan provides a framework for the region; however, it is what is delivered and, importantly, *how* it is delivered that will produce both the step changes and the transformational changes required in Auckland. The Unitary Plan is a critical mechanism in delivering on the Auckland Plan.

A key component of achieving this vision is increasing and improving Auckland's housing stock and neighbourhood cohesion. However, in many areas, Auckland's housing and neighbourhoods are underperforming, in that:

- Existing homes will comprise over 50% of the 2040 housing stock, yet 294,000 of houses in Auckland were built before 1979, the first full year in which insulation was mandatory, and a further 138,000 built between 1979 and 2000, a period when insulation standards were poor.
- There is a current shortfall of new dwellings of around 20,000 to 30,000. To meet Auckland's projected population growth, around 400,000 additional dwellings will be required by 2040. At least 13,000 additional houses must be built each year, yet currently only 5,000 consents for new homes are issued per year in Auckland, and not all these are built (source: Auckland Plan).

- Much of recently built housing has been poorly performing with a significant proportion suffering from weathertightness issues
- Housing has become increasingly unaffordable in Auckland in recent years. Home ownership rates are declining and home ownership is out of reach of a significant proportion of the population while significant rent increases have been observed in all but two of Auckland's suburbs over the past four years.
- Housing performance cannot be disassociated from other household costs such as transport, health and economic wellbeing. Less expensive areas for housing, for example, tend to be on the city fringe where household costs must often include significant transport prices in order to generate income to pay for housing and other household costs.
- The limited ability of households with a range of incomes and lifestyles to live in each area reduces local vitality economically as well as environmentally and socially.
- The inclusion of communities at the neighbourhood level is often left out of development aspirations, planning and delivery when the local lived experience offers significant insights as to what might be most effective in achieving a high level of liveability in each particular place.

The required changes cannot be achieved by delivering business as usual, nor can they be achieved by Auckland Council alone. They will require strong leadership, innovation and a focus on working collaboratively with and across communities, industry and central government and all parts of Auckland Council (including Local Boards and Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs)). The challenge of the Unitary Plan is to deliver on the key built components of the Auckland Plan and to effectively integrate these to achieve desired economic, environmental and social outcomes.

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## **Beacon's Comments on the draft Unitary Plan**

Beacon supports the general direction of the Unitary Plan in that it gives effect to the Auckland Plan. Beacon acknowledges the considerable work undertaken over the past 2 ½ years by Auckland Council, including planning for future growth. Beacon welcomes the focus that the Auckland Council and central government is placing on improving the quantity, quality and affordability of housing in the Auckland area. It is particularly pleasing to see the development of the Housing Accord between Auckland Council and central governments, and to see Stage 1 of the Housing Action Plan completed. The challenge now is to move the actions into tangible outcomes. The Unitary Plan is a key component in delivering high performing, affordable homes and neighbourhoods, within the Council's goal of a compact urban form.

However, Beacon raises a number of points in the sections below, particularly in regards to strengthening the link between objectives, policies and rules in the Unitary Plan. Beacon's comments are restricted to areas of Beacon expertise.

- Putting in place principles to ensure good design is especially important when planning more intensive and higher density developments. Beacon welcomes the statutory design requirements included within the Unitary Plan; however, the requirements for sustainable, high performing urban design must be strengthened. Beacon submits that the Auckland Design Manual should either be made mandatory or offered to neighbourhoods or Local Boards to decide whether the guidance should be made mandatory, particularly in areas zoned for increased density. In Portland, Oregon, neighbourhoods were offered the opportunity to have design overlays. Those that chose to have mandatory overlays attracted better quality developments.  
<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/64465>  
<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/53342>
- The Unitary Plan places a strong emphasis on urban development over rural. Rural aspects need strengthening to address issues such as food security as an aspect of resilience and sustainability. Any proposed development of satellite towns must be designed to include a vibrant local hub with amenity, social and economic activities.

## 1. High performing homes (both new and existing) are needed

Much of New Zealand's housing is cold, damp and unhealthy which leads to poor social and health outcomes. In addition, some of the housing built over the past twenty years is poor performing and, at times, not weathertight. It is critical that all new homes built are high performing and that existing homes are brought up to standard. The Unitary Plan has a key role to play in this.

Beacon supports actions in the Unitary Plan to increase the performance of new homes, including:

- Homestar - Beacon supports *Rule 4.2.5.4.1.1* requiring that all new homes in developments containing five or more dwellings on a site, be designed and constructed to a minimum 6-star level. However, Beacon requests that this requirement be extended to cover all new residential developments, not just those developments with five or more dwellings.
- Accessible buildings – Beacon supports *Section 2.2.2.- support a quality built environment, policy 4.4* - encourage buildings to be designed to be accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities. However, the Unitary Plan must identify method(s) to implement this; otherwise, it is unlikely that the objective will be implemented.

Beacon supports actions to improve the performance of existing homes:

- Retrofitting insulation
- Encouraging local energy generation, water capture and stormwater/wastewater disposal, either at an individual property or neighbourhood level. For example, a neighbourhood energy utility system provides space heating and hot water to new buildings in Southeast False Creek, Vancouver

<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/neighbourhood-energy-utility.aspx>

- Including, encouraging and enabling secondary suites (both new and existing) and secondary dwellings (this will improve the economic performance of homes)
- Ensuring they are in neighbourhoods that are effectively linked to the wider settlement by effective public transport and interconnected locally through the provision and programming of public open space and facilities.
- Where necessary, demolishing sub-standard homes.

In Beacon's view, quality, sustainable and affordable housing and neighbourhoods can underpin much of the progress required to achieve the vision and direction outlined in the Auckland Plan.

## **2. Support for compact urban form**

Auckland has developed as a car based city with dormitory suburbs built at the end of motorways. Suburbs built in the 1960s and 70s, such as Massey, are still being retrofitted to provide a minimal level of amenity and services. It is critical that future development is well planned and provides high performing neighbourhoods - places where people can work, shop, socialise and live locally, supported by improved public transport and cycle/walkways. A failure to deliver this will mean Aucklanders continue to spend more unproductive, costly time in their motor cars, rather than living close to where they work and leading healthier, happier lives.

Achieving a better urban form will require integrating land use planning with economic development and transport planning, with the land use planning driving the transport planning, not the other way around.

Beacon's research has identified medium density mixed-use as a sustainable neighbourhood form which brings significant benefits to New Zealand cities. The realisation of a quality compact city with intensification around transport hubs will require an urban design framework with a strong emphasis on resilience, low impact design, demand management and diversity of infrastructure supply. Unfortunately, to date, New Zealand has not specifically designed dwellings and neighbourhoods to achieve these benefits; Aucklanders' experiences of higher density, mixed use has been poor. Therefore it is likely that much of the concern raised by Auckland residents in relation to increased densities is based on experience of poor design and construction. The opportunity now is to plan, design and retrofit Auckland neighbourhoods to realise the liveable city vision. Beacon's Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit is a robust evidence-based tool that can usefully guide decision making by Council and others towards achieving improved liveability at the neighbourhood level.

Beacon supports the compact urban form and submits that:

- The Council investigates further increasing densities along key transport corridors as well as in town centres.
- The Rural Urban Boundary (RUB) not be expanded beyond what is already envisaged in the draft Unitary Plan.



- Actions be undertaken to ensure uptake of brownfields redevelopment, not just greenfields development. While the Auckland Plan and Unitary Plan reference the supply of additional housing in the context of brownfields development and greenfields development predominantly within the RUB, it is concerning to note that the details of the Housing Accord and Auckland Unitary Plan have a bias towards greenfields development. For example, the Auckland Unitary Plan *section 2.2.3 Supply of urban land*, while referring to land availability, focuses on the RUB and greenfields expansion.
- Actions be taken to ensure ‘refill’ development within existing properties, such as secondary suites, secondary dwellings and pocket neighbourhoods in ways that enable a level of invisible densification and which do not compromise the character and amenity value of existing neighbourhoods. For example, backyards could be amalgamated for development of smaller dwellings along co-housing principles.

### 3. Increasing supply of housing

The Unitary Plan focuses on increasing housing supply by providing for new greenfields development, predominantly within the proposed rural urban boundary. In section two, above, Beacon has raised the importance of brownfields development as a source of land for new housing. Beacon draws Auckland Council’s attention to overseas development examples providing additional homes (both rental and home ownership), as detailed below. In some cases these are already being enabled in the draft Unitary Plan.

- Beacon supports *section 4.3.1.3.3. - the conversion of a dwelling into two dwellings* as a way of providing affordable housing and, in some cases, to cater for changing needs of households. Similar conversion for both rental and home ownership are being encouraged in other cities with successful outcome, for example

- the City of Langford, Canada

<http://www.cityoflangford.ca/EN/meta/departments/building-department/secondary-suites.html>

- the City of Victoria, Canada

<http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/departments/planning-development/development-services/zoning.html>.

As an example, the house (right), in Victoria, Canada, has been converted to strata title with three homes, yet remains unchanged from a street perspective.

***Conversion of home into three homes with strata title, City of Victoria, Canada***



- Beacon supports amending the Unitary Plan to enable a small second unit separate from the main dwelling on larger sites (>600m<sup>2</sup>) e.g. above a garage. This has been achieved successfully in Portland as the site plan below shows.



***Site Plan for second unit, Portland, Oregon.***

- Beacon also supports the redevelopment of existing buildings for mixed use purposes that also provide for increased residences. In downtown Victoria, Canada, Victorian buildings have been seismically strengthened and redeveloped for residential purposes. In some cases, penthouse suites have been added unobtrusively, set back from the road (see below).



***Redevelopment of downtown building for residential, Victoria, Canada***



- Beacon supports the subdivision of larger sites in order to provide additional dwellings with smaller footprints. In the inner suburbs of Victoria, larger sites have been rezoned for 2 smaller dwellings that are built in a form in keeping with the existing neighbourhood as the photograph below shows.



*Development of smaller dwellings in keeping with existing neighbourhood, Victoria, Canada.*

Beacon submits that the Auckland Council investigate statutory and non-statutory methods to encourage such developments so that density is increased less visibly, local businesses and services benefit from higher concentrations of people and the city's foot print does not extend.

#### **4. Support diversity of development opportunities**

Beacon supports simplifying the existing 99 residential zones into the five residential zones listed below:

- Rural and coastal settlement
- Large lot
- Single house
- Mixed housing
- Terraced housing and apartment buildings

Beacon notes that that terraced housing and apartments comprise just 7% of the residential land use. Beacon submits that there may be opportunities to further expand this, particularly along transport corridors, and other areas of high amenity, close to good public transport, walking and cycling option.

A key aspect of this is integrating a mixture of scale. Examples of where this has successfully been implemented are shown in the following photographs.



***Integration of a mix of scale - West Hills, City of Langford, Canada***

***Integration of a mix of scale - Dockside Green, Victoria, BC***



## 5. Support high performing neighbourhoods

For communities to become stronger, more resilient, and better able to meet their needs, so that Auckland becomes a better place to live, work and play, Council and communities must work together to ensure the design and function of local places (dwellings, neighbourhoods and connecting infrastructure such as roads and parks) meets the needs of local communities. The Council also has the opportunity to be an enabler of quality and affordable housing and neighbourhoods, creating exemplar, mixed-use, medium density developments as part of the redevelopment of council-owned facilities. Beacon submits that:

- Planning for neighbourhoods needs to take a bottom up, community-led approach. It must be collaborative, including people from all walks of life. Seattle's Department of Neighbourhoods (<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/npa/>) provides a useful model for neighbourhood planning. An overview of Seattle's experiences is also about to be published in the Journal of the American Planning Association (Sirianni, Carmen. 'Neighborhood Planning as Collaborative Democratic Design: The Case of Seattle')
- The regional policy statement must include objectives and policies relating to social well-being (both people and communities), not just economic well-being. Social wellbeing must be considered both in terms of supporting activities such as the provision of social infrastructure and disabling activities such as a lack of affordable housing.
- Beacon supports the inclusion of section 2.2.7 on social infrastructure. However, more detail is required. For example, the rural-urban boundary process needs to more fully address how social infrastructure is to be provided in new greenfields developments. Much of this infrastructure needs to be provided prior to new population growth, rather than after people have come. In many cases, there is an existing population in these areas and their lived experience and aspirations can be useful in determining local priorities and effective additions to social amenities. Processes of bottom up planning such as those developed in the US for example (<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/12/how-hud-went-hyper-local/4074/> and spoken about by Jim Diers on recent tours to NZ) illustrate the value of actively including existing residents in greenfield, brownfield and infill/refill development. Bottom up neighbourhood plans identify neighbourhood assets, opportunities and needs so great places to live, work and play are developed.
- More locally, Hobsonville Point provides an example of where provision of infrastructure has led population growth (<http://www.hobsonvillepoint.co.nz>)



- Beacon submits that high performing neighbourhoods must be supported by appropriate non-residential activities and that *section 3.2.1.1 general objectives for residential zones* should acknowledge the benefits of community activities locating in residential areas e.g. childcare, schools, medical, places of worship. Without policy level support for these activities, consent processes will be weighted towards managing the negative effects of the activity rather than the positive benefits. In several places, residential activities are co-located with community facilities such as the Delridge library and Delridge Arts and Cultural Center, both in Seattle, for example.



***Co-location of community activities and residential, Delridge Library, Seattle***

- Beacon supports *section 2.2.4 Neighbourhoods that provide housing choice* and submits that more policy direction is needed on neighbourhoods offering choices for households on low to moderate incomes e.g. how the mix will be provided; otherwise, the current trend towards exclusion of lower cost housing will continue. Beacon supports Inclusionary Zoning as one means of providing housing choice within neighbourhoods.

## **6. Provide for affordable housing**

The lack of affordable housing is already having a range of adverse environmental, economic and social outcomes. This includes overcrowding of housing, reduced home ownership; uncertainty in rental occupation; increased community instability; long-term costs associated with housing needs post retirement, people having to live further from work, activities increasing transport costs; and increased costs of living flowing into higher costs for businesses.

It is pleasing to see that the Unitary Plan and Housing Accord both address housing affordability. Beacon supports actions to address housing affordability and notes the following:

- There is a need to strengthen some of the objectives, policies and rules in the Unitary Plan relating to affordability
- Housing affordability must be addressed within neighbourhoods, not just across the region. There needs to be a broader range of housing types and costs within suburbs.

Specific comments are:

- *Section 2 - regional Policy Statement* - Beacon has identified a weakness in policy support for affordable housing and social infrastructure at the regional policy statement level. This will constrain the ability to consider and require appropriate provisions of affordable



housing through structure planning and rezoning, particularly in light of the recent Housing Accord providing scope to impose conditions relating to housing affordability.

- Beacon recommends housing affordability issues be strengthened in *section 2.2.1 Providing for growth in a quality compact urban form*. Housing affordability is mentioned in the introductory comments but not in the objectives or policies. Without high level objectives relating to housing affordability, subsequent policies relating to housing choice and diversity will not have any direction relating to cost and affordability. In addition, this is required to base Inclusionary Zone provisions on, or to impose affordability conditions on consents. Specifically Beacon recommends the following:
  - Inclusion of an objective to increase the supply of affordable housing (both for rental and home ownership) for people on low to moderate incomes. Affordability must reference not just the upfront costs, but affordability in terms of ongoing living costs such as transportation and housing designed to reduce running costs.
- Beacon supports the investigation of Inclusionary Zoning including (priority area 6, action 17).
- Beacon supports the concept of value capture through a betterment levy and/or targeted rate on properties over an agreed value to fund infrastructure or affordable housing (priority area 5, action 16). While this would ultimately be implemented through the Long Term Plan, Beacon believes that it is critical that provision is made in the Unitary Plan to enable this to happen.
- Beacon proposes that Auckland Council looks to successful models of US Pacific Rim cities where cities have developed funding mechanisms to leverage the development of affordable housing either through the proposed value capture mechanism above, or a targeted rate of all households for a period of ten years to build up an affordable housing fund.
- Beacon submits that *section 2.2.3 Supply of urban land policies 1,2 and 7* be amended to refer to ensuring a range of supply in terms of housing price points and in relation to relative affordability.
- Beacon supports *Section 2.2.2 A quality built environment, policy 5* which refers to a range of built forms to support maximum choice, however this also needs to refer to affordability as an aspect of choice. Choice needs to be more clearly defined and include maximum choice within neighbourhoods, not just at a regional scale

## 7. Sustainability and sustainable design

To build and sustain the quality of life available to Aucklanders, all aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> century sustainability must be addressed including housing needs, climate change, a move to a low carbon future, and improved community resilience. Beacon supports projects to manage demand for services, create more resilient, localised and diverse infrastructure networks.

Infrastructure is a major cost to Council. The Unitary Plan must enable and encourage demand management, resilience, and creating an enabling environment for innovative solutions including localised and diverse networks for all infrastructure – roading, waters, energy. Involving communities in such design and decision making can also help to change user

behaviour to impact positively on the effectiveness of hard infrastructure at both a neighbourhood and regional level.

Beacon supports the explicit reference to climate change, and the objectives and policies in the *Regional Policy Statement 2.9 Responding to Climate Change* and submits:

- That the policies and related rules be strengthened to include avoiding the adverse effects of climate change.
- That the policies be amended to more directly reflect the importance of urban design and in particular the role of compact urban form in providing a more sustainable urban form.
- Support for *policy 2.9 1e* to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change in Auckland by waste minimisation initiatives to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills and energy consumption associated with transport of waste. This must focus on minimising the amount of waste created, not just waste going to landfill. Waste minimisation must be considered as part of development and well as in the ongoing use of buildings.

In addition, the objective, policies and rules within the Unitary Plan and in other supporting documentation such as the Auckland Design Manual need to more strongly emphasise sustainability issues that include social, economic and environmental aspects. For example:

- Water - the capture and reuse of rainwater must be supported by policies and rules in the Unitary Plan. Currently there appears to be little enabling the use of rainwater tanks and several rules which seem to be unnecessarily restrictive - for example, rule 4.5.1.1.2.4 requires that rainwater tanks in Beachlands not be visible from the street and rule 4.5.10.7.4.3.2 requires the roof area for rainwater tanks in Whitford to be unnecessarily large (a two bedroom homes requires a roof area of 145m<sup>2</sup> and a four bedroom home a roof area of 295m<sup>2</sup>). An enabling environment allowing people to have a supplementary water supply with rainwater tanks and the aggressive promotion of demand management and good neighbourhood design is required. Beacon has done extensive work on the benefits to local government of demand management – including cost benefits and value analysis. Beacon draws Auckland Council's attention to the reports *Slowing The Flow – A Comprehensive Demand Management Framework for Reticulated Water Supply*; and *Water Demand Management: An Economic Framework to Value* [www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/reports\\_and\\_presentations\\_water](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/reports_and_presentations_water)) as sources of information around best practice demand management approaches.
- Mechanisms should be included in the Unitary Plan to ensure that a greater level of sustainability e.g. provision for their own energy, heat, cooling and water needs is integrated within all new and existing developments, either at a house and neighbourhood level. One way of achieving this is through a renewable energy policy requiring a certain percentage of any new developments to offset their carbon footprint through renewable energy provision on site (following the Merton Rule example from the UK<sup>1</sup>).

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*1 For more information please see 'The Merton Rule, A review of the practical, environmental and economic effects' available from [www.nhbcfoundation.org](http://www.nhbcfoundation.org)*

- 2.9 Responding to Climate Change, Policy 2d refers to restricting urban development in flood prone areas and areas vulnerable to sea level rise. Yet it appears that higher density development is being encouraged in areas where there is potential impacts from sea level rises and storm surges. For example, the Browns Bay basin is all 5m or less above sea level yet development is being encouraged.
- Beacon supports 2.2.2 *A quality built environment, policy 8 8*, requiring new developments containing five or more dwellings and all new large scale office and industrial buildings to incorporate best practice sustainable design and encourage all other developments to incorporate the elements of sustainable design. This must be extended to require all development to incorporate best practice urban design. In addition, water sensitive design must also incorporate design to reduce water use, not just maximise water re-use.
- Sustainable design is also about enabling community and neighbourhood involvement with a bottom up planning process. Beacon recommends that the Council work through key neighbourhoods and Local Boards in further developing the draft Unitary Plan. This is particularly important in developing Area Plan overlays, where the planning must be community/neighbourhood driven and inclusive of all sectors of the community.

## **8. Support for Maori development including papakāinga housing**

Beacon supports activities to enable the development of papakāinga within the Auckland area and draws Council's attention to work that Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara is undertaking to improve the quality of housing for their iwi and hapū. Beacon has been working with Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara scoping this project, alongside Rodney Local Board and other project partners. The project will deliver on a number of the Council's strategic goals including those related to improved health outcomes, quality of housing, training/employment and contributing to the Māori community.

Beacon identifies the following key points.

- That an enabling process be developed for papakāinga housing, which takes a holistic approach including:
  - Where appropriate, allowing activities that enable people to support themselves financially.
  - Providing for communal facilities and activities where planned by whānau e.g. meeting spaces, communal provision of facilities such as laundry, kitchen, bathroom rather than individual provision in homes.
  - Encouraging and enabling sustainable design such as local water and waste water systems and energy generation.
  - Allowing densities to meet the need of whānau within sustainable design principles.

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## Beacon Resources

A summary of the key programmes of work undertaken by Beacon which could assist Auckland Council is provided in this section. Further details are available free of charge on the Beacon website [www.beaconpathway.co.nz](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz) or through contacting Beacon directly.

## Neighbourhoods

### ***Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit***

Neighbourhoods are important because the way they are laid out and organised has significant impacts on how a home performs and on the direct, as well as indirect, costs to households.

Beacon's Neighbourhood research team has developed a framework and tools to measure the sustainability of New Zealand neighbourhoods - *The Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit*.

This research indicates that the neighbourhood scale presents opportunities for:

- House retrofit
- New design and construction awareness/desirability
- Distributed reticulation systems – electricity and water
- Improved stormwater management
- Improved connectivity and mixed use
- Reduced transport costs
- Community inclusion and leadership, including bottom-up planning.

The Kit is available free to help planners, designers, neighbourhood managers and developers identify, discuss and prioritise changes to improve the sustainability of both new and existing neighbourhoods. This is currently being updated. Please contact Beacon for further details.

### ***The value of neighbourhoods***

Beacon's research has identified that low density non-mixed use (e.g. neighbourhood that are almost entirely residential) generate net costs rather than net benefits for a city. As a corollary, mixed use, medium density neighbourhoods are of value to cities, socially, economically and environmentally. Research which awarded monetary values to different neighbourhoods showed that a sustainable neighbourhood is worth \$1,362 per household compared to a negative value of \$595 per household for NZ's least sustainable neighbourhoods.

Find out more at

[www.beaconpathway.co.nz/images/uploads/Final\\_Report\\_NH3112\(2\)\\_Valuing\\_neighbourhoods.pdf](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/images/uploads/Final_Report_NH3112(2)_Valuing_neighbourhoods.pdf)



## Homes

### ***HSS High Standard of Sustainability®***

New Zealand homes can and should perform better. Homes that perform well have benefits that go beyond direct financial savings; they benefit the whole economy, local council budgets, and, most importantly, families.

A sustainable home is the sum of its parts. Beacon's focus is on whole-of-house sustainability - encompassing energy, water, indoor environment, waste and material/product selection. This focus is reflected in our work on a set of performance benchmarks to achieve a sustainable home - the HSS High Standard of Sustainability®.

See

[www.beaconpathway.co.nz/being-homesmart/article/beacons\\_hss\\_high\\_standard\\_of\\_sustainability](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/being-homesmart/article/beacons_hss_high_standard_of_sustainability)

### ***Policy Options for Sustainable Homes – A resource manual for local government***

Beacon Pathway has conducted research into the council-induced barriers to building and renovating homes to a high standard of sustainability. The research found that policy and regulatory barriers to sustainable building choices exist in:

- administering the Building Act and Building Code
- inflexible conventional infrastructure standards (particularly for water)
- District Plan provisions that provide no allowance for sustainable designs such as passive solar orientation or features such as rainwater tanks (e.g. traditional development controls for height, yards, and height-in-relation-to-boundary).

Beacon research has shown that councils throughout New Zealand have developed a range of initiatives to encourage people to make more sustainable choices in their homes and neighbourhoods, and are seeing some good results. The resource manual of policy options for councils provides an overview of the range of tools available to councils, and gives detailed examples of policies and practices already in place in New Zealand. Beacon recommends that Auckland Council explore a number of the options outlined in the Resource Manual to assist in realising the visions outlined in the Auckland Plan.

Download the Manual from

[www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/a\\_resource\\_manual\\_for\\_local\\_government](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/a_resource_manual_for_local_government)

### **National Value Case**

Beacon's *National Value Case for Sustainable Housing Innovations* showed that there were clear national benefits to encouraging housing improvements on a wider scale. In particular, it showed the economic value to New Zealand of:

- A direct private economic gain to households of 1% GDP (\$2 billion in 2007 \$ terms).
- Savings in household energy consumption of 22PJ/year with reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 3600kt/year.
- Direct water savings of 130 million m<sup>3</sup>/year.

### **Renovation and job creation**

Beacon research, supplied to the Job Summit 2009, established the value to the nation of large-scale home renovation by illustrating that housing is a critical part of urban infrastructure and that renovation is a viable source of job creation. *Large scale renovation is BIG on job creation* showed that for every 1,000 houses retrofitted to perform to Beacon's HSS®, a total of 392 full time equivalent jobs are required.

See [www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/large\\_scale\\_renovation\\_creates\\_jobs](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/large_scale_renovation_creates_jobs)

### **Water demand management**

Beacon's water research has demonstrated the value of a demand management approach and provided a framework for councils considering instituting it. *Slowing the Flow: A Demand Management Framework* is a guide to the development of water demand management strategies and policies for all those working in reticulated water supply.

Beacon's research has also developed a comprehensive approach to valuing council implementation of water demand management. A case study of Tauranga City Council's demand management measures showed that the Council delayed the implementation of the next major water supply infrastructure by approximately 10 years with a net benefit to the community of \$53.3 million in 2009 terms.

See [www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/reports\\_and\\_presentations\\_water](http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/reports_and_presentations_water)

## **Expertise**

Beacon Pathway has considerable expertise and networks in the sustainability of New Zealand homes and neighbourhoods, has viewed best practice overseas, and has worked extensively with local councils. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss how we can help with Auckland Council and Local Boards.