

Submission

Beacon Pathway Submission to Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Draft Area Plan

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What is Beacon?

Beacon Pathway Incorporated (Beacon) aims to transform New Zealand's homes and neighbourhoods to be high performing, adaptable, resilient and affordable. To achieve this, Beacon works collaboratively across the residential sector, brings together demonstration projects to provide proof of the benefits of improving New Zealand's housing stock, and underpins these with robust fact-based propositions.

The Incorporated Society 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 the Beacon website 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 methodology underpins Auckland Council's 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 believes that these tools and approaches can contribute to developing high performing homes and neighbourhoods which are a key component of achieving the Council's vision of *the world's most liveable city*.

Beacon's Members include: Christchurch City Council, EECA, New Zealand Steel, Fletcher Aluminium, Certified Builders, Resene and Insulpro Manufacturing.

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1 Beacon's comments

Beacon supports the development of Area Plans with the purpose of showing how the Auckland Plan will be put in place at the local level, and congratulates the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board as being the first Local Board in Auckland to create their Area Plan.

However, it is disappointing that the draft Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Area Plan is limited in its focus and does not address many of the important components from the Auckland Plan. The Auckland Plan details a clear path towards achieving *the world's most liveable city*. In Beacon's view, quality, sustainable and affordable housing and neighbourhoods can underpin much of the progress required to achieve the vision and direction as outlined in the Auckland Plan.

In terms of housing, the draft Area Plan needs to be delivering on the broad range of actions to achieve the Auckland Plan's Strategic Direction 11 - *House all Aucklanders in secure healthy homes they can afford* (refer Appendix 1). While it is pleasing to note that the area plan provides an emphasis on compact urban form around town centres and transport nodes, there also needs to be a strong emphasis on already existing infrastructure – especially homes and neighbourhoods.

Therefore, Beacon submits that the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Area Plan includes the following types of actions to achieve the Auckland Plan Strategic Direction 11 targets:

- Increasing housing affordability – Beacon supports the development of a broad range of housing types and sizes around town centres and transport nodes as outlined in the draft Area Plan. However, there are also a range of other activities which can assist in housing affordability including budgetary advice on housing costs and actions to reduce the costs of running a home such as insulating and other retrofit activities.
- Increasing home ownership, especially for Maori and Pacific people – Home ownership has a number of benefits for individuals and the community, particularly around stability for children in terms of educations and building stronger community ties. Home ownership rates in the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board area are low – in 2006 46 percent of families owned their own home compared to 64 percent regionally. Beacon submits that the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board and Auckland Council should work with social housing

providers such as the New Zealand Housing Foundation (NZHF) and Vision West to investigate and deliver more affordable paths to home ownership – for example, through shared equity schemes

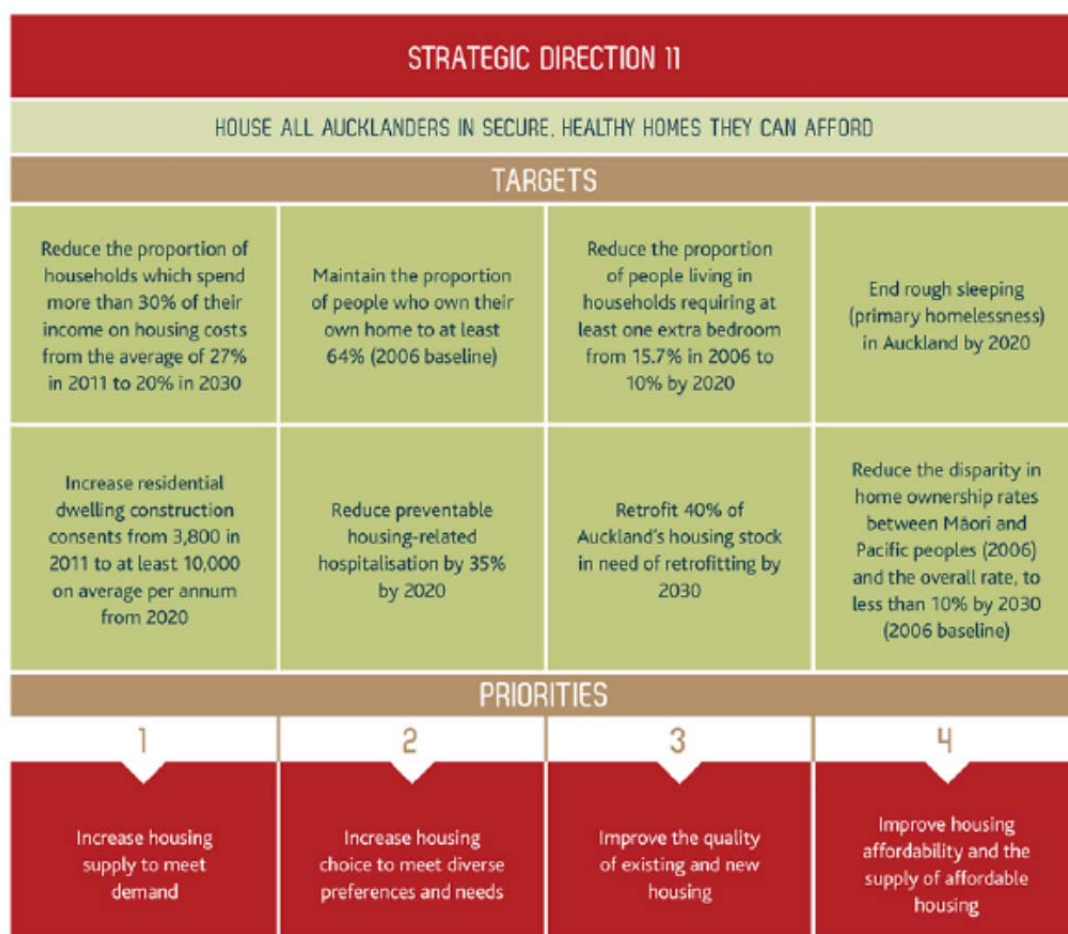
- Reducing overcrowding in homes – There is a need to explore programmes to assist larger families into suitable housing. For families who own their own homes, this would include retrofitting to provide additional bedrooms. More than half of Māngere-Ōtāhuhu residents rent their home and programmes need to better match rental accommodation with family needs, particularly for those in private rental accommodation.
- Ending rough sleeping and homelessness – Auckland Council, local boards, not-for-profit organisations, government agencies and other relevant parties need to work collaboratively to reduce factors which lead to homelessness and to provide safe, affordable and healthy alternatives to sleeping rough.
- Increasing the number of new homes being built – To meet existing needs, 13,000 new homes must be built in Auckland each year, an increase from the 3,000 currently built. It is pleasing to note the draft Area Plan proposes development around town centres and transport nodes. However, actions need to be taken by the Auckland Council to ensure these developments occur in a timely manner and that best practice design is incorporated into both residential and non-residential development, from subdivision location and design, through building design and implementation. Beacon has developed a Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit which provides a robust evidence-based tool that Auckland Council could use to assist in developing more sustainable neighbourhoods.
- Improving the quality of existing homes to reduce the poor health outcomes arising from damp and cold housing. Much of Māngere-Ōtāhuhu's housing stock, like the rest of Auckland, is likely to be performing poorly. For example, 294,000 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. Recognising this, older homes need to be retrofitted to reduce energy use, help address health inequalities, and reduce the cost to residents of keeping their houses warm and dry. A number of excellent programmes exist which focus on increasing the performance of existing homes such as Auckland Council's Retrofit Your Home and EECA's Warm Up New Zealand. As the part of Auckland Council closest to their local community, the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board has an important role to play in encouraging the number of houses being retrofitted. Auckland Council's current \$6m annual funding of Retrofit Your Home allows for the retrofit of approximately 1200 homes per annum and Warm Up New Zealand (EECA) provides additional government funding.

Achieving the vision – *the world's most liveable city* – will require bold and innovative solutions and hard decisions to encourage and require the major changes in behaviour needed. Oncoming climate change, peak oil and economic tightening reinforce the need for development that is well-connected and serviced by public transport, housing/commercial building stock which is energy, water and waste efficient, and opportunities for diversity of supply - water, energy and localised waste management. Climate change strategies, a move to a low carbon

future, improved community resilience and other aspects of 21st century sustainability must be woven through any future developments in the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu area. This must be coupled with strong leadership, innovation and a focus on working collaboratively across communities, industry and central government, and the various aspects of Council (including Council Controlled Organisations) to deliver a sustainable future.

The Auckland Plan provides the foundation for moving Auckland to a more sustainable future and all other Auckland Council, Local Board and Council Controlled Organisation strategies policies and plans must be delivering on the framework provided in the Auckland Plan.

2 Appendix One: Auckland Plan – Strategic Direction 11



3 Appendix Two: Beacon resources

3.1 Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit

Beacon's Neighbourhood research team has developed a framework and tools to measure the sustainability of New Zealand neighbourhoods. 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.

Opportunities for councils include using the tool to:

- Assess all new neighbourhood developments and potentially to set a minimum threshold for new developments to meet
- Assess for reductions in development contributions
- Fast-track desirable developments
- Assess existing neighbourhoods to guide resourcing decisions and draw out the critical issues for neighbourhood improvement and planning.

Download from

www.beaconpathway.co.nz/neighbourhoods/article/the_neighbourhood_sustainability_framework

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. 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/neighbourhoods/article/valuing_sustainable_neighbourhoods

3.2 Homes

HSS High Standard of Sustainability®

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. Taking this approach, we have developed 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

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 high performing homes. 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).

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 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 explores 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

3.3 Expertise

Beacon Pathway has considerable expertise in the sustainability of New Zealand homes and neighbourhoods and has worked extensively with local councils. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss how we can help with Auckland Council and local boards.