

Unitary Plan Civic Forum

October 2012



Background and overview

The Civic Forum was intended to engage with around 100 participants who would be involved at several points during the Unitary Plan process who could discuss key issues and help to spread the word to encourage others to participate. It was designed to engage with people who would not normally get involved in council consultations. Hosted by the Deputy Mayor with Te Radar as compere and lead facilitator, members of the public were invited to attend two sessions:

- Tuesday 23 October 2012 – an introductory evening providing background to the Auckland Plan and an overview of what the day's discussion would involve
- Saturday 27 October 2012 – a day's discussion on hot topics identified through the drafting of the Unitary Plan. This included introductory information on why those issues were important and outlined some of the draft content.

On the Saturday, six round-table discussions were facilitated by senior managers with a note-taker writing key points from the discussion on flip charts. After each round of discussion, participants were invited to review other tables' discussions and were encouraged to vote for the three points they agreed with most strongly using sticky dots.

The design of the process followed similar approaches taken in Australia and Canada, which identified the benefits of targeted approaches to engage with people not normally involved.

Recruitment of participants

Participants were initially invited by selecting a random sample of Aucklanders through the Electoral Register. People's Panel members were also invited to register their interest in participating and interested members were selected to give a good demographic mixture of people from different communities and age groups.

To engage with people who aren't normally involved, 300 names were selected at random from the electoral register. The benefit of using this approach, as opposed to using the council's property database or phone book, was that it had the potential to reach people who rent, as well as young or younger people.

The council's People's Panel members were also invited to register their interest in being involved and approximately 300 indicated that they were both interested and available to attend.

Participant demographics

Of the 74 total number of participants over the two days, 9 came from the electoral role, one through the Ministry of Youth Development, 49 from the People's Panel and 13 from word of mouth.

The local board area has been identified for most participants. In addition, for those who were recruited through the People's Panel, we have been able to identify additional demographic data. The table below identifies the demographic data of those who participated in the discussion day.

Participant demographics table continued

	Participant demographics	Number of participants (60)	Proportion of participants (where demographic data is known)	Statistics NZ Percentages 2006 census
Gender	Female	17	45%	51%
	Male	21	55%	49%
	Unknown	22		
Age	15-24 years	1	2%	20%
	25-34 years	4	8%	19%
	35-44 years	5	10%	21%
	45-54 years	10	21%	17%
	55-64 years	8	17%	12%
	65-74 years	9	19%	7%
	75+ years	1	2%	6%
	Unknown	12		
Ethnicity	European	22	55%	55%
	Maori	3	8%	11%
	Pacific Peoples	1	3%	15%
	Asian	6	15%	18%
	Middle Eastern, Latin American, African	2	5%	1%
	Other	6	15%	8%
	Unknown	20		
Local Board	Albert-Eden	4	7%	7%
	Devonport-Takapuna	4	7%	4%
	Franklin	3	5%	4%
	Great Barrier	0	0%	0.1%
	Henderson-Massey	4	7%	8%
	Hibiscus and Bays	4	7%	6%
	Howick	2	3%	9%
	Kaipatiki	4	7%	6%
	Mangere-Otahuhu	0	0%	5%
	Manurewa	0	0%	6%
	Maungakiekie-Tamaki	5	9%	5%
	Orakei	2	3%	6%
	Otara-Papatoetoe	1	2%	6%
	Papakura	1	2%	3%
	Puketapapa	3	5%	4%
	Rodney	5	9%	4%
	Upper Harbour	1	2%	3%
	Waiheke	0	0%	1%
	Waitakere Ranges	6	10%	3%
	Waitemata	2	3%	5%
Whau	3	7%	5%	
Unknown	4			



Where we live and work

Discussion questions

- What do you like about where you currently live?
- What is important to you when choosing a place to live?
- What kind of home do you think you might like to live in 20-30 years time?
- Where will your friends and family live?



What we like – Points raised with strongest support:

- the natural environment (harbours, beaches, streams, waterways, parks and views e.g. of the harbour or the Waitakere Ranges). This included easy access to these kinds of spaces and some also felt that it was important to have their own private outdoor space/garden.
- good urban design through design guidelines e.g. minimum floor space, style of housing, consistent heights.
- mixed neighbourhoods, social and private, ages and backgrounds – a place for families to grow and where people can remain as they grow old.
- Auckland is a series of villages – need to retain that in their character.
- access to public transport and facilities such as shopping and community centres where people can interact.

Other points raised included:

- Auckland Council to provide support through grants in areas changing from rural land to urban e.g. through windfall venture capital fund
- expanding population – green opportunity
- flexibility and choice
- focus development on centres and communities
- opportunity to amalgamate greenspaces to enlarge parks
- heritage (eg Ponsonby)
- atmosphere / environment – buzz
- CBD – waterfront
- senior discounts
- making good start on public transport – particularly rail – need to keep improving
- no through traffic in streets, good views, great neighbourhoods
- educate children and grandchildren that they don't always need to use a car.

What we would like to change - Points raised with strongest support:

- affordable housing - difficult for young people / first time buyers getting on the property ladder
- traffic and transport issues – poor public transport service so reliant on car, public transport too expensive, not using roading corridor effectively – cycleways, trams etc
- regulatory costs – building, consenting, rates (possible first home buyer subsidy), cost of civic services
- city doesn't end at the CBD – too much focus on the CBD at the expense of other areas
- safe neighbourhoods
- more opportunities to walk or cycle to work
- lack of infrastructure eg broadband in rural areas
- balance between residential, industrial, recreation.

Other points raised included:

- traffic density, speed and driving style
- more trees in some parts of Auckland
- lack of housing choice (especially in rural areas)
- important that variety of consultation methods used in engaging with people on the unitary plan
- Auckland needs development to east of scenic drive – also Waitakere village
- overhead powerlines
- no co-ordination in developing services
- outside of apartments horrible appearance
- fear of crime
- conflict between central and local governments – roading / motorways
- more pragmatic about what we protect and why
- growth of the city should go into the foothills
- rural areas – cows smell
- mixed use home occupation
- too much development – needs more regulation
- don't like what I see outside the train from Manukau to CBD
- trees on motorways
- difficult for older people when more shopping is done online or self-service (lack of social contact)
- Auckland is clean city but needs to be more clean (e.g. litter problem in Kelston)
- make centres adaptable to change – banking will change but important we don't have empty spaces where these services / shops are located.



What kinds of home you might live in over the next 20-30 years:

- sustainable
- range of housing units across the city
- developers need to contribute to community and public space
- stay in neighbourhood but live in different style of property
- shared public spaces
- indoor / outdoor living
- need to have better public transport
- farms or gardens on top or around apartment buildings
- allotments / community gardens
- intensification ok with
- good transport
- close to work
- encourage sense of community
- good amenities
- social infrastructure.



Where we live and work - what the Unitary Plan says

Discussion questions

- Do you think that the proposals will allow you to live the way you want to live in the future?
- Will it help to enable more housing choice and affordable living?
- What are your concerns and why?



Points raised with strongest support:

- development to be driven by needs and character of local community (which will change over time)
- good design / stronger design controls
- rules to ensure amenities that promote healthy communities
- flexibility allows range of housing supported by good infrastructure / services / buses / local sustainability
- implementation of the plan is consistent
- consider the influence of new development on its surroundings.

Other points raised:

- local planners to play a stronger role
- incentives for green rules e.g. rainwater tank
- seek community input / expertise on what housing would be suitable
- more character of housing development needed – individuality / unique design – more variety required
- safety and perception of safety important
- create good neighbourhoods – integrated holistic developments
- capital gains tax?
- apartments with lifts (accessible like public buildings)

- buildings are not to hinder the views
- parking – still provide for some parking (maximum parking provision)
- stronger role for council: regulation / landscaping / zoning / price
- shops (under flats) need to be suitable and functional
- design that allows easy alterations internally
- high rise – shadow – visual pollution
- trees important – leafy suburbs, rooftop garden (joint areas to build community), courtyards
- “car stacking” carparks (like in New York)
- mixed / attached type dwellings - how to ensure good maintenance – should the UP deal with this? Does it add too much to the red tape? But how do we maintain amenity?
- no homogenous shopping – mix of shops that suit local needs
- Auckland Council should encourage / educate people for change coming rather than just legislate / regulate
- need design to cater for walking / cycling from the start
- zones must accommodate character of areas – incremental change.



Protecting our heritage, character and environment

Discussion questions

- Where are your favourite parts of Auckland? Why do you like them?
- What do you think we need to do to protect them?
- How do we get the right balance between protecting our environment and heritage, while ensuring that we do have enough affordable and quality housing?
- Do you think that the proposals will allow you to live the way you want to live in the future?
- Will it help to ensure we look after the things we love about Auckland?
- What are your concerns and why?



What people like - points raised with strongest support:

- truly fresh approach to the Unitary Plan not just recycling or updating existing plans e.g. need a new coastal plan. Focus on enabling good things to happen not just preventing bad things
- encouraging a culture of stewardship
- access to sun / light
- opportunity to increase accessibility to waterways and increase use of streams, let it enter the consciousness of users
- encourage environmentally friendly solutions (solar panels, composting toilets and water storage solutions).

Other points raised:

- capture citizen's voices through other media eg txt, facebook, computer screen in mall, national media
- diff Preserving Historic integrity versus Historic Purity
- to encourage more connecting walkways.
- wetlands often other great habitats.
- Green Corridors – Ecology – waterways – stormwaters and streams
- view corridors (entrance to Snells Beach, Long Bay, include coast, Waitakeres)
- heritage = old + significant + useful
- protect biodiversity
- corporate houses for staff / help with deposits eg east Tamaki
- commons in all our subdivisions
- preservation for our next generations – there is a 'cost'
- incentivify rather than regulation
- costs of protection / heritage
- use of ecological engineering e.g. green roofs, swales, Project Twin streams.

Concerns - points raised with strongest support:

- bird life preservation – city is encroaching – access points to waterways (creeks)
- need to pay attention to Manukau
- city centre unattractive and unfriendly
- resources to look at seaview shaft
- lack of recognition that city can evolve and heritage is perspective
- fencing streams
- stormwater runoff affects harbour
- unmonitored waste water
- identical houses in subdivisions without character or facilities.

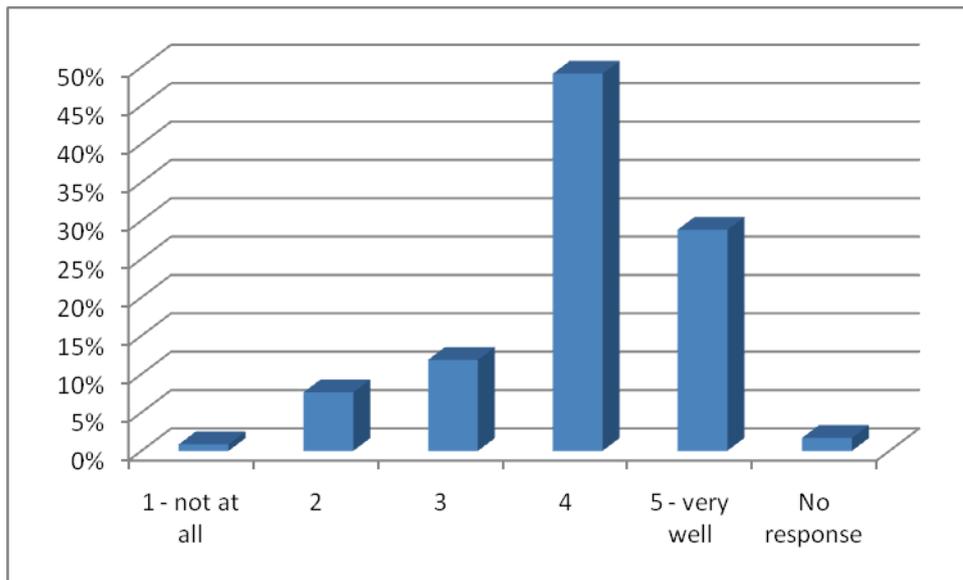
Other points raised:

- surface water / drains going into sewers
- education on environment to new migrants (citizens)
- developing coastal spaces
- ability to have stormwater storage.
- people should be allowed to state what can/can't happen on a piece of land
- pocket parks – not attractive, depends on design and connection with community, location, fencing, graffiti, safety.
- no protection for bush where bats live (Franklin)
- polluted streams, beaches after rain
- bush protection – is in place but don't need more regulation
- pollution from stormwater
- shade from high rises on eastern beaches.

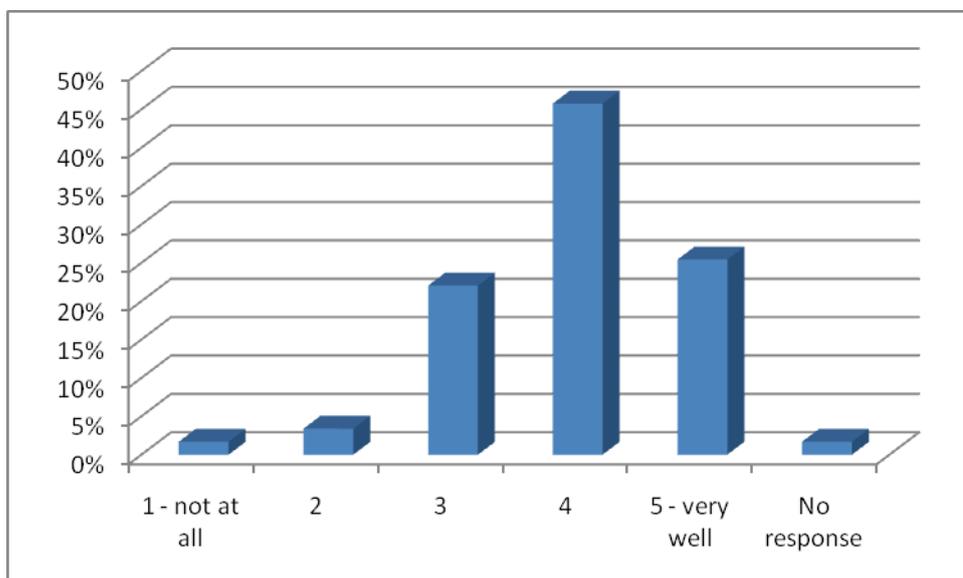
Feedback from participants

Feedback forms were made available to participants after the Saturday discussion. A total of 59 responses were received.

1. How well do you feel that the Civic Forum has helped you to understand the key directions of the Auckland Plan?



2. How well do you feel that the Civic Forum has helped you to understand the key issues facing the Unitary Plan?



3. Would you be interested in taking part in future events like this?



4. The most valuable aspect of this forum was? Selection of responses:

- communicating ideas and concerns, meeting members of the council, discussing ideas with others and key stakeholders in the council
- I will know how to prepare for the next one and I won't be so nervous, plus, more importantly, meeting passionate, like-minded Aucklanders
- understanding the amount of work to be done
- free discussion and the ability for people to interact and disagree on occasions
- the demonstration by the council that they want to engage! The ability of people from many backgrounds and with a variety of interests/drivers to discuss and share ideas. It was great to hear about what other people consider important and to hear some innovative ideas
- recognition of the unanimity of the great majority of the people present in their love our city and environment and their wish to keep it in the best possible way. Very encouraging
- I think that affordable housing and accessible transport are the two things I learned most about. I hope to research and learn more about the two
- meeting and talking to strangers. (I was surprised we finished early. Everyone seemed to have plenty to say!)
- people talked about what they liked about Auckland
- getting an update on progress of the Unitary Plan
- opportunity to hear other people's points of view - there is so much diversity and so much KNOWLEDGE out there
- group discussions and exchange of ideas and info
- the openness and common ground shown within the groups – the ability to constructively discuss and engage with higher level council employees

- Te Radar – keeping it light...
- having a chance to speak as the usual consultative process of submissions is too complex for me to give my views
- holding fast to things people value, lest they get lost
- Auckland Council MUST LISTEN TO ITS RESIDENTS and incorporate what we said today into the Unitary Plan. Being able to talk directly to the council planners.

5. Please leave us with your thoughts and suggestions of how we can further connect with communities (e.g. networks we could disseminate information through):

Selection of responses:

- forum of youth, students, forum of young professionals, family forum
- high schools - asking young people their ideas and helping them understand how this will affect their futures
- carry out quantitative market research to get a true breakdown of the population's attitude e.g. maybe only a small number of activists was historic buildings protected, and the great majority may not want rate wasted on the council bothering
- local papers
- put something in the monthly Auckland booklet for people's suggestions and fears
- presentations in communities
- this was an older group. The young working people (20s) have different attitudes to development and living styles; there is a need to find ways to engage with this age group - web based?
- use local newspapers. I come from Chinese communities. There are a couple of free Chinese newspapers; the council can use that as a channel to connect with
- make sure that the feedback makes it to the decision makers
- education in high schools (civics classes). Residents associations. Professional bodies
- approach senior citizens to understand their experiences and also our responsibility to provide good environment for retirement. Approach schools, liaise with Government to bring Auckland Unitary Plan/Auckland Plan as a subject of Form 6/7 education. Make our future generation educated
- sharing through the sporting communities and schools (where our future is)
- blogs are fantastic. Good website, easy to navigate
- the point should be what you can ELICIT from the ratepayers. This requires a reception system into which people can place statements at any time
- booths with video/touch screen within shopping malls, churches, schools etc. Take the plan to the people in an objective manner

- build/design a framework for community engagements that is adopted by local boards across Auckland, and where the energy of the community can take some of the burden
- just keep hammering away and keep the dialogue going
- probably more similar activities like this
- email updates
- social media (Facebook, Twitter etc), radio
- ratepayer associations or equivalent. School evenings for both children and parents
- leafletters or flyers to individual households, different cultures, religions and communities.
- online information
- encourage local community boards - this planning process and long term implementation requires communication within communities - I have lived in my home for two years and don't know my neighbours. We need to be community minded people which needs to begin now in order that we move forward together
- celebrating Swanson, Strategic Property Advocacy Network (SPAN)
- include all community groups in the dialogue, not just ratepayers associations
- Interviews and radio
 - Text yes/no
 - Agree/disagree ads
- GO TO THEM - make a website on which people can share their views on there
- church meetings
- malls
- have a tent and face painting fun day/balloons etc
- get popular people to present e.g. Te Radar, rap artists, someone relevant to youth in South Auckland
- engage South Auckland
- go to Otara Market.

Selection of other comments provided:

- to keep our environment as what they are. If 50% speak second language that means the education for environment protection to the people who come from overseas is very very important. This education campaign should be keep running again and again
- this is my first time attending such an event and I must say I am very happy the way it was handled and planned. I feel like I'm part of the Auckland community! Fabulous!
- very good discussion but useless if I hadn't done the reading prior to meeting. I wouldn't have had any idea of key changes. Satisfactory overview but a bit more detail could be useful
- great session... hope you have plans to roll this out over different communities. Would have liked some guide or 'thinking points' prior to session so I could have been more focussed

- coming from the wonderful ex-Waitakere City, I would like to see a movement towards embracing two things from that culture: 1. Adopting eco-city principles 2. A cooperative partnership with community groups and individuals rather than a handing down of council-made decision
- people want to have an opportunity to have their say, but feel the council is the other/the enemy. Figure out a way to them WANTING to have their say
- encourage community action to protect environment – communities can work if the bureaucratic environment enables them
- don't bring metropolitan problems into rural communities
- trust the knowledge base of small communities.

► **Find out more:** phone 09 301 0101
or visit www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

