

TECHNICAL REPORT: CENTRES AND CORRIDORS

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Technical Report:

Centres and Corridors Workstream

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Updated 2012 post Draft Auckland Plan

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1 Executive Summary (Updated 2012)

The network of Auckland’s centres and corridors have previously been identified as having a key role in accommodating growth as part of a quality, compact city¹. Planning based on a strong network of centres has advantages and efficiencies in providing greater sustainability of the public transport network and provision of other infrastructure, work and living options that reduce travel distance and time, providing a range of housing and lifestyle options, improved accessibility through clustering a diverse range of community services and amenities. If this aspiration is to be fulfilled then a strong vision of what we want our centres and corridors to be in the future and how we will achieve this will be needed.

The advent of the Auckland Council provides an opportunity to develop a consistent methodology for describing and grouping our centres and corridors. Such an approach enables a consistent understanding of the role of centres and corridors across the region. This understanding then provides a foundation on which, as part of the wider prioritisation and sequencing of growth, to set appropriate targets for future population and employment growth; and clear directions to infrastructure and service providers on the focal areas for growth and change (SGS Economics & Planning, 2007). As part of the Draft Auckland Plan (date) a categorisation system based on role and function as well as interventions was proposed as follows.

Role and function:	A broad categorisation system (city centre, metropolitan centres, town centres and local centres as well as intensive corridors) informed by previous work	Answering the questions about what and where growth and development would be supported.
		Specified in the Urban Chapter of the Auckland Plan providing spatial information about location of centres and corridors
Interventions:	A broad interventions categorisation consisting of regeneration, market attractiveness and emergent categories.	To be focussed at the implementation stage ie how/what techniques will be used to achieve the outcomes sought.
		Used as a check in the Development Strategy and in implementing the Plan)

A list, of both centres and urban corridors was put forward as part of the Draft Auckland Plan using the above system, on the premise that this formed the basis for on-going refinement through further consultation on the document. This was particularly the case for centres near the transition

¹ Regional Growth Strategy, Growing Smarter, FLUT, current modelling

points between categories in the hierarchy and those centres that are likely to change significantly in the role they play in the community over the next 30 years.

As part of the feedback received to the Auckland Plan a number of amendments were made to this approach for the development of the Auckland Plan to be adopted by the Governing Body.

These changes focused on:

- Revision of the intervention categories
- Developing and recommending thresholds for the role and function categories
- Deleting the approach of using intensive corridors as a mechanism for accommodating growth
- Recommending amendments to the classification of particular centres within the role and function and intervention categories system.

This technical paper provides an overview of the research that was done, primarily for the draft Auckland Plan. As an update, at the conclusion of the paper, the rationale is provided for amendments to the centres approach post the Draft Auckland Plan, leading to development of the final Auckland Plan put forward for adoption.

2 Introduction

The structure and dynamics of cities are constantly changing and evolving. In the case of Auckland, its geographic context together with its cultural, historic and political development patterns have produced its distinctive urban form. Centres have developed initially on the coast then along transportation routes, military roads and the rail providing the impetus for development and commerce. The early tram network also provided a lasting legacy of linked corridor and centre growth particularly on the isthmus, while the post war period with the rise in car ownership together with road and motorway construction led to a pattern of low density suburban expansion (Auckland Regional Council, 2010a). More recently, mirroring overseas trends, new forms of development have appeared including masterplanned centres and stand alone retail shopping centres.

Regionally, the city centre has achieved a primacy in its commercial, education, employment, cultural and civic roles, supported by a ring of inner city communities providing living, working and entertainment. The dispersed nature of the urban area, together with a legacy of multiple local authorities has meant that a number of centres have developed fulfilling strong civic and business roles while enabling regional communities to have their own character and community focus. Supporting these centres are a network of other centres of varying scale, roles and functions; from those serving as regional attractors for specific roles to those that serve the day to day needs of local communities within catchments that are based on walking distances.

While all contribute to the vitality and cohesiveness of Auckland, the Auckland Plan focuses on those centres that have a regional role; providing residential, employment and service roles that will contribute to a quality compact city approach to future planning. Local and neighbourhood centres, are acknowledged for the collective role they play in providing a resilient structure of interrelated centres and for the local role they play in providing for their community, however planning for these centres is more appropriately considered as part of the development of the Unitary Plan and as part of local planning initiatives.

The network of Auckland's centres and corridors has been identified as having a key role in accommodating growth as part of a quality, compact city (Auckland Regional Council 2011c). Planning based on a strong network of centres has advantages and efficiencies in providing greater sustainability of the public transport network and provision of other infrastructure, work and living options that reduce travel distance and time, a range of housing and lifestyle options, and improved accessibility through clustering a diverse range of community services and amenities. If this aspiration is to be fulfilled then a strong vision of what we want our centres and corridors to be in the future and how we will achieve this will be needed.

3 Purpose of Centres and Corridors Workstream

Accommodating growth in centres and corridors has been a key feature of growth strategies for Auckland at both the regional and local levels. This workstream looks at the evidence that:

- A strong network of centres and interrelated corridors is an essential part of delivering on the Mayor’s vision of Auckland as the world’s most liveable city including the quality, compact city approach.
- A regionally consistent approach to categorising our centres and corridors, should be based on an understanding of urban form, role and function and interventions that are required for successful prioritisation and implementation.
- Focusing commercial, and other high trip generating, activities in centres is essential to maintain a strong network of centres that are best able to serve their communities, and support a high quality transit system.

The findings of this workstream are important inputs to other related workstreams, in particular the Development Strategy and how growth is allocated, prioritised and sequenced across the region. (See Report Towards a Preferred Urban Form: A Background Document for the Auckland Spatial Plan).

3.1 Relevant Statutory Framework

As part of its planning role, Auckland Council is required to produce “the Auckland Plan” which is a long term strategy (20 - 30 years) that contributes to Auckland’s social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing. Consistent with the requirements of sections 79(4)(b) and (d) of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009, the Centres Strategy workstream contributing to the Development Strategy by providing a centres hierarchy; a framework as to where and how growth might be provided within town centres and intensive corridors within Auckland.

4 Issues and Challenges

Centres are places where a wide range of facilities and services to the community are concentrated in one place. Auckland’s centres form a network of activity hubs which act as community focal points and are locations where people can access a range of activities and services. Centres policy has been, and continues to be, a key element of the approach for achieving a quality, compact liveable city. However, concentrating people, activities and facilities in centres means that good design is essential.

In suburban areas low density design typologies can provide buffers between users, thereby providing some mitigation to indifferent design solutions. This luxury is not an option in higher density locations where users are more closely focussed. This means urban design and place-based outcomes must be considered carefully. The challenges will be in ensuring that policies and implementation approaches are in place that will deliver quality outcomes.

There has been variable success in implementing a centres based approach to accommodating growth. A review of the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in 2007 showed that some

positive outcomes had been achieved but that there was a need for a more “sophisticated approach to implementing the RGS using new tools and approaches to achieve better, quicker implementation and on a larger scale. In particular, quality, comprehensive redevelopment and intensification in town centres is critical to achieve the RGS vision.” (Auckland Regional Council 2007: p4).

This study found that one third of residential development between 2001 and 2005, had occurred in identified high density centres and corridors. However, retail as a key component of town centres showed that much of the new employment created had been as part of out of centre development.

Much of the residential development within centres was based on developments in the city centre. This has since dropped dramatically and between 2006 and 2010 approximately 17 per cent² of residential development was centres based growth. This indicates a disjunction between the aspirations for centres based growth and where growth is actually occurring.

The advent of the Auckland Council provides an opportunity to develop a consistent methodology for describing and grouping our centres and corridors. Having such an approach enables a consistent understanding of the role of centres and corridors across the region and from this stems policy and prioritisation approaches.

An essential part of this will be developing a better understanding of the centres and corridors network. Growing Smarter identified as an issue the need to provide a regionally consistent approach to classifying centres and corridors, in recognition that they are key to delivering on the quality compact growth concept. To this end there have been a number of attempts at providing a better system of categorising centres and corridors. This understanding then provides a foundation on which, as part of the wider prioritisation and sequencing of growth to set appropriate targets for future population and employment growth; and clear directions to infrastructure and service providers on the focal areas for growth and change (SGS Economics & Planning 2007: section 2.3).

In identifying centres there must also be an understanding that for some there may be constraints on growth. Limited or slow growth may be a reality in some centres for a range of reasons such as historic heritage, infrastructure constraints, local character etc.

For corridors that have a role in accommodating growth (intensive corridors), the challenge will be providing for the transport and utility roles while supporting community and place imperatives to ensure good living and working environments that cater for local communities. The environmental challenges including the noise and air quality close to transport routes require appropriate design, orientation and location particularly for living areas in buildings. Establishing intensive corridors would provide an opportunity to move towards densities that are more supportive of public transport.

The health of town centres in providing for the needs of their surrounding communities depends in large part on the commercial activity that occurs in the centre, particularly retail activity. Yet with the growth of large malls and large format centres outside traditional centres, many centres have experienced a reduction in their economic health and amenity, and an ability to serve their local communities. A challenge for Council is how this issue should be addressed in order to foster a

² Between 2006 and 2010, in total, 4107 dwellings were consented to within the growth nodes (out of a total 23872 dwellings)

competitive commercial environment, and support an accessible network of strong centres at various scales, to meet community needs.

While the creation of the single Auckland Council provides advantages in terms of rationalising systems there are also challenges, particularly implementation. In the case of prioritising areas for growth, as part of the Auckland Plan, this must be informed by legacy projects that had been commenced by the former councils. The Auckland Council has inherited 84 legacy projects, ranging from centre and precinct plans to structure plans and urban renewal frameworks, which were underway when the Auckland Council was established. A stocktake of these projects has been undertaken to ascertain their stage in the planning process and to inform their prioritisation.

Additionally, the council has committed considerable funds and resources to six transformational projects across the region that must be taken into account. These projects are: Northern Strategic Growth Area (NorSGA) Stage 1, New Lynn, Flat Bush, Tamaki, Silverdale North, and the City Centre.

In future Auckland Council will have to make decisions about how to allocate funding via the LTP and Annual Plan to the greatest effect in achieving its aims of accommodating growth with good design and community outcomes. Prioritising projects and areas of growth according to market feasibility, the need for regeneration and coordination with infrastructure initiatives of projects will be essential considerations to achieve this.

5 Centres - A Quality, Compact Approach

5.1 Benefits of a Centres and Corridors Approach

The premise for identifying Auckland's centres, supported by intensive corridors, is that these provide the greatest opportunity for intensification providing the following benefits:

- Improves lifestyle choice, less car reliance
- Increases range of housing choices
- Reduces need to make longer and more frequent trips
- Reduces traffic and congestion/environment/safety effects
- Attracts investment in centres (and provides for local employment opportunities?)
- Promotes social interaction, identity, health and wellbeing
- Makes more services and amenities more feasible including transit
- Contributes to regional spatial efficiency.

5.2 Scenario Evaluation

Modelling of different growth scenarios provides some validation of a compact city approach having environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits. A centres based approach being implicit in this approach.

AS part of the work for the Draft Auckland Plan, the Scenario Evaluation Workstream³ modelled four different scenarios (see Appendix 1 for comparisons of how these scenarios differed with respect to centres) which emphasised spatial differences in the configuration of growth to understand the implications of how these spatial forms performed against Auckland's agreed regional outcomes. The distinctions between the scenarios included the distribution of growth in centres. Scenarios A, B and C provided variations on compact models of growth while Scenario D represented a more expansive model of growth⁴. The future distribution of growth, both in dwellings (Figure 1) and employment (Figure 2) across the scenarios and as at 2006 is shown below.

³ Paper: Auckland Council. (2011) Technical Workstream Draft Auckland Plan: Scenarios Evaluation

⁴ The appendix details how each scenario accommodated growth in the city centre and fringe as well as centres and corridors.

Figure 1: Total percentage of dwellings by location

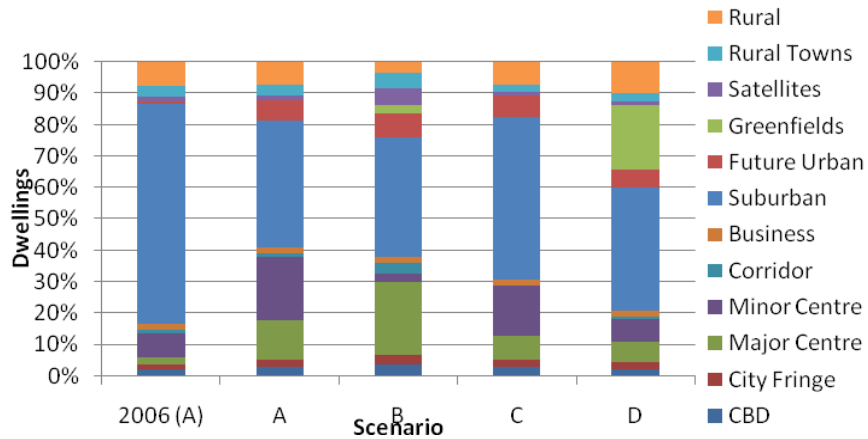
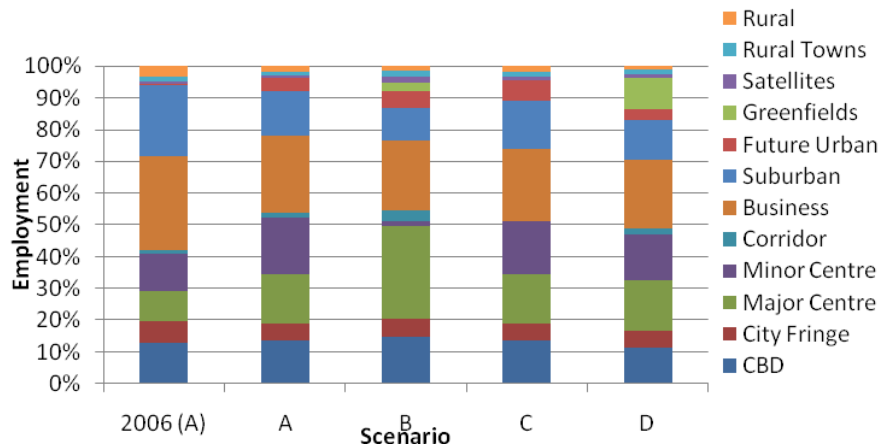


Figure 2: Total percentage of employees by location



The scenarios were evaluated against 33 criteria, across the four wellbeings: economic, environmental, social and cultural, in addition to implementation criteria. A key conclusion was that while planning for a compact spatial form was important and performed the best across the criteria, spatial form is not sufficient in itself to deliver future outcomes for the Auckland region, where additional interventions and incentives would be required to meet these desired outcomes.

The evaluation findings indicated that generally, a more compact spatial form is preferable for Auckland, and “no one scenario evaluated in this process should necessarily form the basis of the preferred spatial form for inclusion in the draft Auckland Plan” (Auckland Council, 2011b, p.14). Often, Scenarios A, B and C (compact scenarios) performed relatively similar, particularly in the modelling results; the most expansive scenario, D, was often an outlier and performed worse. One of the factors, noted in the report that the compact form allowed for was a strong network of centres enabling better social cohesion, walkable neighbourhoods, ageing in place opportunities and better access to social infrastructure, including local facilities. However, the report also indicated that there were “concerns that some of the theoretical densities implied in a compact approach would not match existing market demand” (Auckland Council , 2011b, p.14).

The report also discussed results by theme and in relation to centres noted that:

Scenarios A and B use urban centres for a major role in accommodating growth. Focusing residential and employment growth within a hierarchy of centres presents opportunities for:

- increased accessibility to employment, social infrastructure and local services - reducing dependency on mechanised travel modes
- agglomeration benefits for certain business sectors (particularly in larger centres) and for the most efficient provision of physical and social infrastructure.

Challenges noted were:

- increasing density and the retention and promotion of local character and heritage values, including the provision of public open space.
- need for good urban design principles
- countering further degradation of existing receiving environments and remnant ecological values.
- addressing market feasibility for delivering intensive development
- providing appropriate housing choice, particularly at high and medium densities.
- developing a suite of tools, including policy interventions and partnerships with central government in regeneration centres.
- identifying appropriate typologies for multi-unit developments that will meet market demand and preferences.

No conclusions were drawn regarding intensive corridors as modelling is not technically viable. The Scenario Evaluation Workstream deferred to the Regional Corridors Report 2010 (Auckland Regional Council 2010d).

5.3 Principles for Centres and Corridors

Centres are focal points for community life.



A high concentration of people, both day and night, within an attractive, walkable mixed activity area: serviced by excellent public transport (and preferably good road access); well serviced by roads for the movement of goods and services; and a focus for employment and civic functions (Regional Sustainable Development Forum, 2008: p 16)

Corridors connect people, places and activities



Intensive Corridors provide the linkages both within the city and beyond; supporting centres and employment areas. They are often multi-functional providing passage for people, goods and utilities and may fulfil wider needs such as ecological pathways

Corridor connections support centres and provide complementary living and local employment opportunities (Auckland Regional Council, 2010d)

This paper addresses those corridors where there is potential for intensive development of mixed use environments within the timeframe of the Auckland Plan, there are however other corridor types that have been identified as part of the Auckland Plan. These acknowledge the multiple roles which corridors often play within the urban structure. In particular the Transport Workstream Report considers the role of corridors in providing for the transport activities, including the development of Rapid Transit Corridors and Freight Corridors. Additionally, the Workstream on People and the Economy highlights the role of corridors in improving movement of goods and people to aid productivity increases and efficiencies.

5.4 A Centres Policy

The following provide some principles for the way that we approach future planning and design of our centres.

Planning with communities and partners in mind

- Engaging in early and continuing involvement of the community when developing centre plans and frameworks.
- Being realistic and feasible in planning, it is important to work with our partners in central government, industry and the development sector
- Developing a programme to undertake renewal projects
- Council needs to be the strongest advocate for its centres policy. It is an important landowner and asset owner and it is important that all areas within council are working towards decisions which strengthen our centres
- Developing a common understanding with central government partners of the importance of locating services and facilities in centres

Planning with place

- Designing with context - Building on local character and identity, sense of place and heritage, the individuality of centres is a strength amenity, accessibility, community, landscape and built form, transport pattern

Strengthening existing centres

- Building on the strength of the city centre as the pre-eminent centre in Auckland
- A Sub-regional approach - this is an important role for a small number of larger centres providing opportunity to have greater alignment of living and working opportunities across the region. Seek solutions that build the strength of the network rather than just the individual centre
- Encouraging a diversity of uses in centres
- Setting priorities and developing a programme for producing planning frameworks for centres identified in the Auckland plan based on the role and function of centres, the urban form and intervention techniques
- Supporting existing or planned public transport infrastructure
- Recognising the role of the public realm increases as centres become more intensely used.
- Encouraging good models of intensification of residential activities within the walkable catchment of centres

Corridors linking people and places

- Recognising multiple roles of intensive corridors providing a transport role and providing a complementary living and working environment
- Developing a programme of planning for intensive corridors which recognises that they have a complementary role to centres
- Sequencing the planning and release of intensive corridor capacity to follow centre development, so that the strength of centres is not weakened by development along intensive corridors.

Policy Approach

- Undertaking area spatial planning to facilitate the future development of development opportunities through master planning and structure planning exercises that involve local people to ensure there is a shared and coordinated vision for an area's development.
- Actively monitor the state of centres and intensive corridors including the diversity of activities and services (i.e. annual town centres health checks).
- Investigating, through the development of the Unitary Plan, the use of tools (such as design codes) to assist in the area spatial planning process.



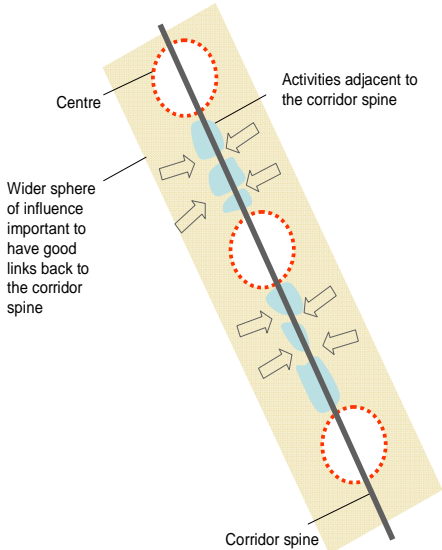
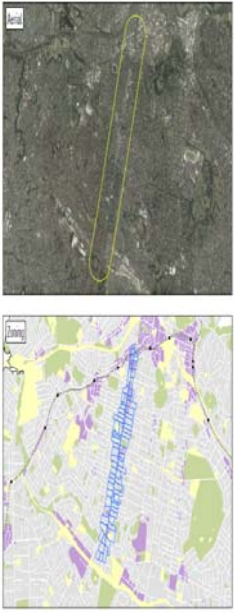
5.5 Describing Centres and Intensive Corridors

In building a picture of centres, and in other interrelated projects concerned with current capacities and how growth could be accommodated in Auckland's centres and intensive corridors, a standardised approach was taken to describing centres by circular catchments and intensive corridors by standard widths⁵. This relatively coarse grained approach however is not sufficient to describe individual centres for other purposes, such as developing planning frameworks or assessing planning applications, this would need to be refined through contextual analysis. This more detailed

⁵ This standardised approach has been used in modelling for the Auckland Plan

analysis would also delineate the constituent parts of the centres - the commercial/mixed use core as the focus for intensification and its walkable catchment, based on the 10 minute walking distance and modified by categorisation and context as appropriate. Similarly, intensive corridors comprise the spine plus a walkable catchment of approximately 400m, the distance beyond which most movements will be predicated on vehicles, Auckland Regional Council (2010 d). These concepts are shown in the illustrations below.

Distinguishing the centre core and its catchment is important as there is some confusion as to this distinction. Centres are described in different ways for different purposes for instance the Business Improvement District (BID) groups (see Appendix 2) are interested in the defined areas over which targeted rates are applied. In contrast for centres where growth is a factor the walkable catchment is also important.

 <p>A diagram showing a central blue circle representing a core, with a larger dashed blue circle representing its catchment area. A blue line extends from the core, representing a corridor spine.</p>	 <p>Growth Node & Aerial Images</p> <p>An aerial photograph of the Henderson area with blue and pink meshblocks overlaid on the street grid.</p>
	<p>Example Henderson showing meshblocks selected</p>
 <p>Centre</p> <p>Activities adjacent to the corridor spine</p> <p>Wider sphere of influence important to have good links back to the corridor spine</p> <p>Corridor spine</p> <p>A diagram of a diagonal corridor spine. A central blue line is labeled 'Corridor spine'. Three red dashed circles are placed along the spine, labeled 'Centre'. Arrows point from these centres towards the spine, labeled 'Activities adjacent to the corridor spine'. A larger yellow shaded area around the spine is labeled 'Wider sphere of influence important to have good links back to the corridor spine'.</p>	 <p>An aerial photograph of Dominion Road with a yellow oval highlighting a section. Below it is a street map of the same area with a blue line highlighting the road and surrounding blocks.</p>
<p>source Auckland Regional Council (2010d: p70)</p>	<p>Example Dominion Road showing generalised area for investigation, this would be considerably modified by historic</p>

	character constraints in parts of this corridor
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5.6 Centres and Commercial Activity

Commercial activities include retail, offices, and commercial services such as personal, property, financial, household and business services. To support the liveability of Auckland, locating commercial activity in centres is preferable because it provides shopping and social activity that can be accessed by walking, cycling or public transport, as well as the car. It also fosters a strong local economy which supports a greater range of goods and services, attracts new investment, and provides local jobs. Strong centres contribute to community identity, pride, and cohesion. Accordingly, a policy direction which promotes the location of commercial activity in centres is desirable to support liveability. As such the management of the quantity, quality and location of commercial activities, becomes an integral component of centres policy.

The management of commercial activities is discussed further in Appendix 3.

6 A Centres Classification System

6.1 The Auckland Plan – An Opportunity for a Consistent Classification

The advent of the Auckland Council provides an opportunity to develop a consistent methodology for describing and grouping our centres and corridors. Such an approach enables a consistent understanding of the role of centres and corridors across the region. This understanding then provides a foundation on which, as part of the wider prioritisation and sequencing of growth, to set appropriate targets for future population and employment growth; and clear directions to infrastructure and service providers on the focal areas for growth and change (SGS Economics & Planning, 2007).

Growing Smarter (Auckland Regional Council, 2007) identified the issue of the need to provide a regionally consistent approach to classifying centres and corridors, in recognition that they are key to delivering on the quality compact growth concept. To this end there have been a number of attempts at providing a better system of categorising centres and corridors. For centres all these previous classification systems have been based on a role and function approach.

Analysis has shown that there are advantages and disadvantages to each of the classification systems that have been mooted. This has made it difficult to move forward and the problem has become more pressing. Without a consistent hierarchy it is difficult to reconcile an Auckland wide approach to planning particularly at the regional level.

Since the Classification Project was completed in March 2008, individual councils have undertaken further planning on centres within their jurisdictions. This work adds to the body of knowledge but needs to be consolidated as part of future work to ensure consistency. In some cases the work has questioned the hierarchy level assigned to particular centres; this is particularly the case at the regional and principal levels of the hierarchy. In particular, Auckland City Council (Auckland City Council, 2010a) did not identify any regional centres within its boundaries; its hierarchy identified Newmarket as a principal centre, this decision was made on the basis of its lack of civic functions and its proximity to the CBD, without having catchment in the same way as other regionally significant centres. As a result of its research North Shore City Council (North Shore City Council, undated) indicated that it saw both Takapuna and Albany as being regional centres, serving different geographic catchments on the North Shore. While Waitakere City Council (Waitakere City Council, 2010) saw Henderson, Westgate and New Lynn as being regional centres; each fulfilling complementary roles for different areas within the city. These differences at the regional, or sub-regional level (depending on terminology) are fundamental in reconciling a classification as part of future options within the Auckland Plan to ensure that the urban form of Auckland delivers on liveability.

While all the classification systems are different and comparisons are difficult, some general observations are possible. The regional and principal levels of the Regional Classification Project system have similarity to the sub-regional level within the Regional Policy Statement classification system, they contain 11 centres in common, with alignment particularly in the higher order of

centres and those that are on the Rapid Transit Network (RTN). The Regional Classification Project system (Regional Sustainable Development Forum, 2008) proposed 4 additional centres at the principal level which in the operative RPS categorisation system are proposed in the tier below.

Subsequently, work done by the legacy councils as part of their individual growth strategies indicates accord, between the alternative systems for less than half the town centres proposed. This is particularly the case with Auckland City's Future Planning Framework, research as part of the project suggested that some centres recommended as town centres in the regional hierarchy (eg Point Chevalier and Mt Roskill) would be more appropriate as local centres (Auckland City Council, 2010). The revision of categories for centres proposed as town centres in the regional context is evident in the work of other legacy councils (eg Waitakere) suggesting that they had revised capacities for centres at this level based on further local research. The descriptors at the town centre level vary greatly between TAs with some variations providing greater guidance or differentiation between outcomes. For instance the North Shore City Council provided details of whether town centres identified were for growth, longer term growth or limited growth. Manukau, in a variation on this made a differentiation between the current role and function of a centre and its aspirational role and function; eg in the rural area Clevedon is listed as a neighbourhood centre currently and a suburban centre aspirationally (Manukau City Council, 2010). The Manukau Plan also provided for specialist centres recognising that in certain locations the mix of activities may have an emphasis on a particular activity (eg Middlemore Hospital).

The Auckland Regional Policy Statement (Auckland Regional Council, 2010) lists only two intensive corridors in the region, these being Lincoln Road and Hobsonville Road. In both these cases there are development pressures present. For Lincoln Road development has produced car-based models. Intensive Corridors that are closer to the city centre have not been identified in current statutory plans however the Auckland City Future Planning Framework identified mixed use corridors (of different intensities and capacity) and business corridors. Similarly North Shore City Council identified a number of corridors for growth.

Based on consideration above, the different methodologies and criteria for differentiating centres across the region do not provide a clear consistent way to compare centres and corridors and this is a handicap in implementing a regional approach to accommodating growth.

Auckland Unleashed: The Auckland Plan Discussion Document (Auckland Council, 2011) proposed an alternative form of classification, one which was focussed on intervention techniques, recognising that implementation is one of the key challenges that must be addressed as part of the plan. This proposed the following intervention categories for centres:

- Regeneration
- Market Attractive
- Emergent
- Satellites
- Rural Villages
- Urban Villages
- Papakainga.

This form of classification provides a way of linking centres and prioritisation for development. It also provides a way of looking at dominant characteristics of the centres identified which may influence their future development for instance the category “emergent”. There are a number of centres identified which have developed as standalone retail centres and in being categorised as a town centre there is an expectation that they will move towards a more mixed use model that provides for a local community as part of their overall role.

6.2 Research

As part of this report a study was commissioned to provide background information for the analysis of centres across the region (Prioritising Centres: Analysis for the Centres & Corridors Workstream, Boffa Miskell (2011)). It was identified that across the region there was varying information about the region’s centres. This posed a constraint for the project and in order to make a first assessment, following the Draft Document, of how centres should be categorised it was important to have some standard information about the attributes that a wide range of centres across the region possess.

This report provides information on 80 centres across the region. Information was collected from a variety of sources which enabled some assessment of each centre across the following 11 attributes:

- current population
- future capacity
- diversity of activity
- planning framework
- retailing protection
- market momentum
- prosperity / deprivation
- physical environment
- transport
- publicly owned property
- infrastructure provision

The information also included reference to the intervention categories so that characteristics of these could be more easily understood.

However, it is recognised that the information is a beginning point only and that in future a more complete and on-going assessment of centres is needed. It is a recommendation of this report that there is a need for a database of consistent information about all centres, particularly those which have a role in the accommodation of growth at the regional level, so that the health and progress of centres can be assessed at regular periods.

This research (Boffa Miskell, 2011) provided valuable insights into the performance of individual centres and shows where centres need to improve to perform well as mixed use centres. Looking at the centres it was apparent that there is a great variability in how they are performing against the attributes listed above. The city centre was the only centre that performed well against all the attributes, while Newmarket and Henderson indicated a strong performance against most criteria. Most of the larger centres and older established centres closer to the city centre tended to perform well against criteria while more recently established centres (including larger centres which had

established initially as standalone retail) and smaller centres and particularly those in the rural areas performed least well.

6.3 Feedback on Discussion Document

Over the course of the development of the Auckland plan, consultation has been undertaken with stakeholder meetings and a submission process. As well during this period Local Boards have produced their draft Local Board Plans which provide valuable guidance.

A summary of the information received from stakeholder feedback on centres is attached as Appendix 4. This includes both general feedback and points that relate to specific centres. In general there was some desire to have a system which combined both role and function and intervention approaches. The need to have a system which took into account the urban form and the way that centres are interrelated was also seen as being important.

The Local boards in their draft plans provided valuable insights into the aspirations for their centres. A summary of the main points made on centres as part of Draft Local board Plans is attached as Appendix 5.

7 Draft Auckland Plan - Preferred Classification System

Our vision for the future, together with our knowledge of Auckland, its urban form, the network of centres and intensive corridors and their dynamics establish a basis for developing criteria and a prioritisation approach. The categorisation system should:

- acknowledge the role of the city centre. This is the focus for the region for employment and civic functions.
- acknowledge the importance of the urban form and the network of centres and mixed use intensive corridors that form a foundation for the way people live. Auckland has a unique landscape and pattern of development that contribute to the way that people move around the region and live, work and play.
- provide certainty – the built environment is complex and constantly changing. We need a basis for making decisions about where we locate our facilities, and provide some certainty for our partners, such as infrastructure providers, who are planning for the longer term.
- provide a rationale for implementation, based on interventions that reflect development impetus in some centres and the need to provide
- provide a rationale for how we consider non-traditional centres – Since the 1970s a number of new centres have developed, primarily based on standalone retail developments. Categorisation needs to provide a basis for these centres to transition to become mixed use centres.

Given feedback and research, the approach for classification recommended was to use a complementary system with role and function together with interventions. This approach has been recommended because:

- Interventions need to be paired with information about urban form and role and function in particular how the network of centres interrelate and work together.
- Forms of role and function classification systems are used as part of best practice
- Feedback from the submission process showed that there was some confusion as to how categorisation based on an intervention approach alone would work. A number of submitters suggested that there should be a complementary approach.

7.1 Applying a Complementary System

Having suggested the use of a complementary two layer system, it is important that this is easily understood. To achieve this it is recommended that the role and function hierarchy is broad in the way that it categorises the centres, similar to that proposed as part of Change 6 to the RPS. This broad approach then allows for some flexibility as to how centres are prioritised and implemented within these categories and enables integration with the Development Strategy.

The new Auckland Council environment enables setting of priorities on a coordinated, integrated regional basis. Conversely, the former environment of multiple councils meant that there were competing priorities at a local level; in this case there was an argument for a more structured hierarchy such as that envisaged by the Regional Classification Project (Regional Sustainable Development Forum, 2008) that would enable a more coordinated regional development pattern.



Accordingly, the basis for a recommended categorisation system was as follows:

Role and function:	A broad categorisation system (city centre, metropolitan centres, town centres and local centres as well as intensive corridors) informed by previous work,	<p>Answering the questions about what and where growth and development would be supported.</p> <p>Specified in the Urban Chapter of the Auckland Plan providing spatial information about where centres and corridors are located.</p>
Interventions:	A broad interventions categorisation consisting of regeneration, market attractiveness and emergent categories.	<p>To be focussed at the implementation stage ie how/what techniques will be used to achieve the outcomes sought.</p> <p>Used as a check in the Development Strategy and in implementing the Plan)</p>

7.2 Draft Auckland Plan - Proposed Categorisations

(a) Role and Function

The categories for role and function suggested for centres are:

 <p>Regionally significant</p>	<p>City Centre (CBD + fringe)</p>	<p>The focus of national and international business, tourism, education, cultural and civic activities. It provides significant capacity for business and high density residential development within a variety of precincts. It is also the focus for regional transportation services. It is surrounded by the city fringe, a walkable catchment, which provides complementary living, business and entertainment activities within traditional and higher density living and specialist precincts.</p>
	<p>Metropolitan centres</p>	<p>These serve regional catchments or have strategic roles within the region. They provide a diverse range of shopping, business, cultural and entertainment and leisure activities, together with higher density residential mixed environments. They have good transport access and are served by high frequency public transportation. These centres have significant growth opportunities for additional business and residential accommodation</p>
	<p>Town centres</p>	<p>These act as hubs for communities providing a wide range of retail and business services and facilities together with community facilities, and are generally accessible by frequent public transport services. They provide a range of residential living options including mixed use and higher density options. They have variable capacity for accommodating new residential and business development.</p>
 <p>Locally significant</p>	<p>Local centres</p>	<p>These act as a focus for communities providing a range of convenience shops and small business services together with some community facilities. These centres are focussed on walkable catchments supported by public transport services. They have variable capacity for accommodating new residential and business development, but to a lesser extent than town centres due to their individual and accessibility constraints.</p>
	<p>Neighbourhood centres and shops</p>	<p>These provide day to day convenience shopping within walkable neighbourhoods. They may also be aligned to a community facility such as a school.</p>

Intensive Corridors are specific urban corridors which provide additional opportunities to accommodate residential and employment growth, development and intensification which complements higher density centres and business areas. They have been chosen on the basis of their location and the strength of the linear, urban linkages they provide for activities; their role in creating densities that support the Quality Transit Network (QTN); their current character; and the ability to provide quality high density mixed use and residential environments (Auckland Regional Council, 2010d)

Appendix 6 contains conceptual maps that illustrate some of the urban form drivers of the network of centres and corridors across the region.

Appendix 7 sets out the list of centres and intensive corridors and the role and function categories that have been recommended for them. The list put forward as a draft categorisation using the above system forms the basis for on-going refinement through further consultation. This is particularly the case for centres which are near the transition points between categories in the hierarchy and where it is likely that the role of a centre will change over the next 30 years (aspirational). For instance New Lynn, Henderson, Sylvia Park, Onehunga and Orewa as either metropolitan centres or town centres; and Mt Albert, Remuera, Clendon, Stoddard Road as either town centres or local centres). The Auckland Plan is concerned with the metropolitan, town centre and intensive corridor categories primarily, as these are the ones that have regional significance in accommodating growth. Local centres, in general, have significance in terms of the role that they play in the community role and are listed for completeness and to illustrate the importance of local centres in providing a more sustainable urban form pattern.

Significant factors that were taken into account in drafting the categorisations include:

- the pre-eminence of the city centre and the way that it acts as a hub for employment, transport and civic, cultural and educational facilities
- acknowledging the city fringe of interlinked communities as a walkable catchment that complements the city centre
- Metropolitan centre level acknowledges centres in the region which serve regional catchments (eg Manukau City Centre) and those that have a strategic role in providing environments that will be important places (because of factors such as location and/or amenity) for accommodating growth. Within a mixed use model that provides greater sustainability, it is acknowledged that some centres will have an employment dominance while others with higher levels of amenity may have a greater balance between employment and residential activities.
- accessibility of the centres and corridors on the inner isthmus to the City centre, together with the proximity of centres to each other compared with other centres in the wider urban area means they are part of a well-connected network, their importance is signified, in general as local centres on regionally significant intensive corridors. Conversely, more centres further from the city centre have town centre status acknowledging that these centres may have a greater role in providing for their communities particularly where there is less accessibility to services and greater distances between centres.
- transport infrastructure projects will be a significant driver in urban form, future RTN extensions will allow far more direct linkages between major centres and will provide an impetus for the development of some centres with greater accessibility (eg centres on proposed rail extensions) .

Over the next 30 years there will also be a need for new centres to be developed, in response to growth. The report Towards a Preferred Urban Form: A Background Document for the Auckland Spatial Plan sets out some criteria for the development of these.

The tension between traditional town centres and centres that are developing as part of stand-alone shopping developments is acknowledged. This paper takes the viewpoint that it is important to work with these centres in providing a more sustainable pattern of residential, employment and services in the future. Stand-alone shopping centres represent significant blocks of land where in

some cases there is potential to provide more mixed-use patterns of development. The need to provide greater protection from out of centre development is set out in Appendix 3.

(b) Intervention Categories

The intervention categories proposed are

- **Regeneration centres** - centres that require a mix of public sector actions to address economic, social and physical inequalities;
- **Emergent centres** - centres that may require some form of physical change to support continued and emergent development; and
- **Market attractive centres** - centres where there is strong market potential for growth and require limited public sector support.

This list carries forward the three main categories (as above Regeneration, Emergent and Market Attractive Centres) suggested in Auckland Unleashed the Draft Auckland Discussion Document (Auckland Council, 2011a) in order to complement the role and function categories.

The intervention categories market attractive and regeneration can be thought of as a continuum. Market attractive centres would need an appropriate planning framework that enabled good design outcomes while those further towards the regeneration end of the continuum would need more investment interventions from council to stimulate development potential (eg addressing deficiencies in the centres attributes such as infrastructure upgrades, physical environment improvements). It is also recommended that only centres at the extremes of the continuum are provided with an intervention categorisation as those in the middle of the continuum are likely to require a mix of measures, some market based and others regeneration focussed. Delineation of where centres lie on this continuum will change over time. It is also recommended that these categorisations are applied to the Metropolitan and Town centre levels and centres on Intensive Corridors as these are the areas which will be prioritised for growth and where the effect will make a difference at a regional level.

Appendix 8 sets out the table of intervention categories applied to centres, this includes information on stakeholder consultation regarding market feasibility and attractiveness.

7.3 Draft Auckland Plan - Categorising Intensive Corridors

Corridors that are intended as part of a liveable, more intensive mixed use environment⁶ generally serve a multiplicity of roles and character transitions, with their linear nature and the demands of fulfilling both land use and transport roles. There is a relationship between these centres and the Quality Transit Network (QTN), with frequent public transport services⁷. The classification of these intensive corridors should provide:

- flexibility that will allow them to grow and develop over time
- some certainty to the community and the market
- an understanding of urban form and the interrelationships between them and centres and business areas
- a rationale for implementation.

Corridors recommended as intensive corridors are ones that support the QTN, and are close to the City centre. The recommendations of the Regional Corridors Report 2009 are used to underpin this approach.

The intensive corridors suggested are recommended as having a mix of uses. The philosophy is that the centres on these corridors are generally local in nature but that because of the interrelationships that they have due to increased accessibility through the corridor and the proximity to the city centre they fulfil a greater role than other centres in the network. Greater accessibility means that they can share some facilities and services or precinct types to produce a more resilient form without the need to duplicate facilities in every centre (for instance Dominion Road with high quality public transport services to the city centre has three centres along its length providing complementary offers Valley Road has the supermarket, Balmoral has the community hall, picture theatre and variety of dining while Mt Roskill has the variety of banking services that have established in proximity to the employment areas in Carr Road).

To recognise the regional role these local centres fulfil they are listed as part of the intensive corridors table (see Appendix 7). Centres on Intensive Corridors are given intervention categorisations as they are making a contribution to the regional accommodation of growth.

7.4 Attributes

While each centre and intensive corridor is unique, Appendix 9 identifies a set of attributes for each of the different levels of the classification system. However not every centre within that level will possess all of these attributes as they are generalised and aspirational and the centres within the region are in varying stages of maturity and the offer that individual centres provide will change over time with development. Further, the attributes identified are neither exhaustive nor exclusive demonstrating the complementary relationship of centres. In addition there are a range of urban design attributes that are critical to the success and vibrancy of all centres and corridors:

⁶ Corridors for predominantly transport (eg freight usage) are not included in this discussion

⁷ This is on contrast to development along the RTN where intensification would be focused on centres rather than the transit corridor between them to ensure the transit emphasis of the RTN is maintained.

Attributes of centres and intensive corridors include:

- A diverse range of activities, uses and densities including residential and employment but with greatest intensity within the core
- People focused development and public spaces contributing to a sense of place
- High quality public realm with buildings addressing the street
- Highly accessible to local area and other centres through multi-modal transport including walking, cycling and public transport
- Retention of character and heritage elements with linkages to landscape features

7.5 Stability or Growth

All centres change and grow over time. However, for some centres there are constraints which limit the extent of that development to a degree whereby the centre provides only for local growth rather than providing for growth which has an impact beyond its local catchment. These are centres where there is an integrity about the way that the centres operate currently, they provide a focus for the residential and business communities around them.

This is the case particularly where there are heritage (either natural or cultural) values which define the character of a centre, for instance Mt Eden and Howick, where significant development would compromise the scale and form of the centre.

It is also possible for environmental constraints to limit the scale of growth that is acceptable for instance growth of centres near the coast could be constrained by coastal inundation constraints, or sea level rise or the inability to provide infrastructure servicing to the level that would be needed for significant changes in resident or business capacity.

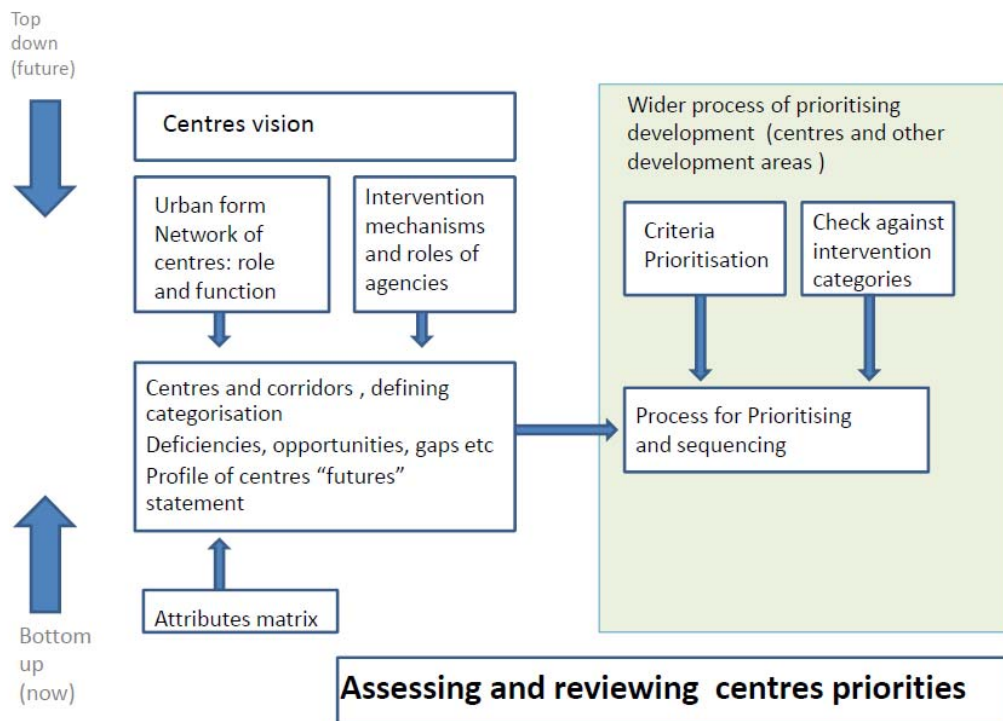
A first draft of centres identified which may have particular constraints is provided in Appendix 7. This should be refined through further research and consultation.

8 Draft Auckland Plan - Prioritisation

To date approaches across the region have varied as to how centres have been prioritised. As previously stated, the Auckland Council has inherited a legacy of 84 plans at a local planning level that are in the process of being planned or implemented. This will mean that existing commitments and priorities will limit new projects that can be funded.

The need for a strategic vision for the area and a planning framework that provides for the desired outcomes in terms of the quality compact city are also a common baseline that is required for implementation. The prioritisation process also needs to take into account the funds available and consider the broader environment of equity across the region and input from Local Boards. This process is considered as part of the LTP and includes assessing priorities from Local Board Plans.

The original approach to addressing prioritisation of centres was to look at the prioritisation of centres as a separate exercise, however as other sections of the plan progressed it became apparent that it was more appropriate to take an integrated approach to looking at all areas that were being investigated for suitability for accepting growth. This approach is shown on diagram below.



Originally the criteria that were recommended for assessing the prioritisation of centres were concerned with:

- Market potential
- Regeneration needs
- Catalyst effect

- Urban form
- Infrastructure
- Legacy work.

These criteria were put during the process to produce the Development Strategy and to progress this strategy the approach taken was to look at a coordinated way for prioritising the larger “neighbourhood areas” rather than the individual components (such as centres) being prioritised separately. These neighbourhoods (of which there were approximately 100) comprised areas with opportunities for centres based growth and opportunities for other growth by way of intensifying areas with higher amenity and market feasibility. The list of five criteria was used to assess each of the areas were:

- Investment in the transport network
- Other infrastructure investments, especially water and wastewater
- Recognition of existing planning projects currently underway
- Ability of the private sector to develop / market feasibility
- Centre role and function

This provided the basis for the table Priority Areas for Growth 2011-2021 in the Development Strategy (see the report of the Development Strategy Workstream “Towards a Preferred Urban Form: A background document for the Auckland Spatial Plan”).

Regeneration was not included as a separate criterion because it was seen as part of the criterion “Ability of the private sector to develop”, regeneration being the flip side of market attractiveness.

The prioritisation exercise only looked at centres in terms of their role and function category on the principle that centres higher in the classification had greater regional role in terms of capacity, function and strategic role with other factors such as market attractiveness being taken into consideration as part of the wider assessment.

In order to ensure that the regeneration aspect was taken into account a check was done following the assessment to ensure that centres and areas identified as ones with regeneration characteristics were represented in the priorities identified over the course of the implementation of the Plan. This was also the case for market attractive and emergent categories.

This cross check indicated a spread of centres / neighbourhoods that have regeneration needs, emergent centres and those centres / neighbourhoods with some degree of market attractiveness within the priorities.

Using the market attractive and regeneration categories within wider neighbourhood areas is probably more appropriate than applying it to centres. This is more in keeping with the London Plan philosophy that regeneration needs apply to a wider area.

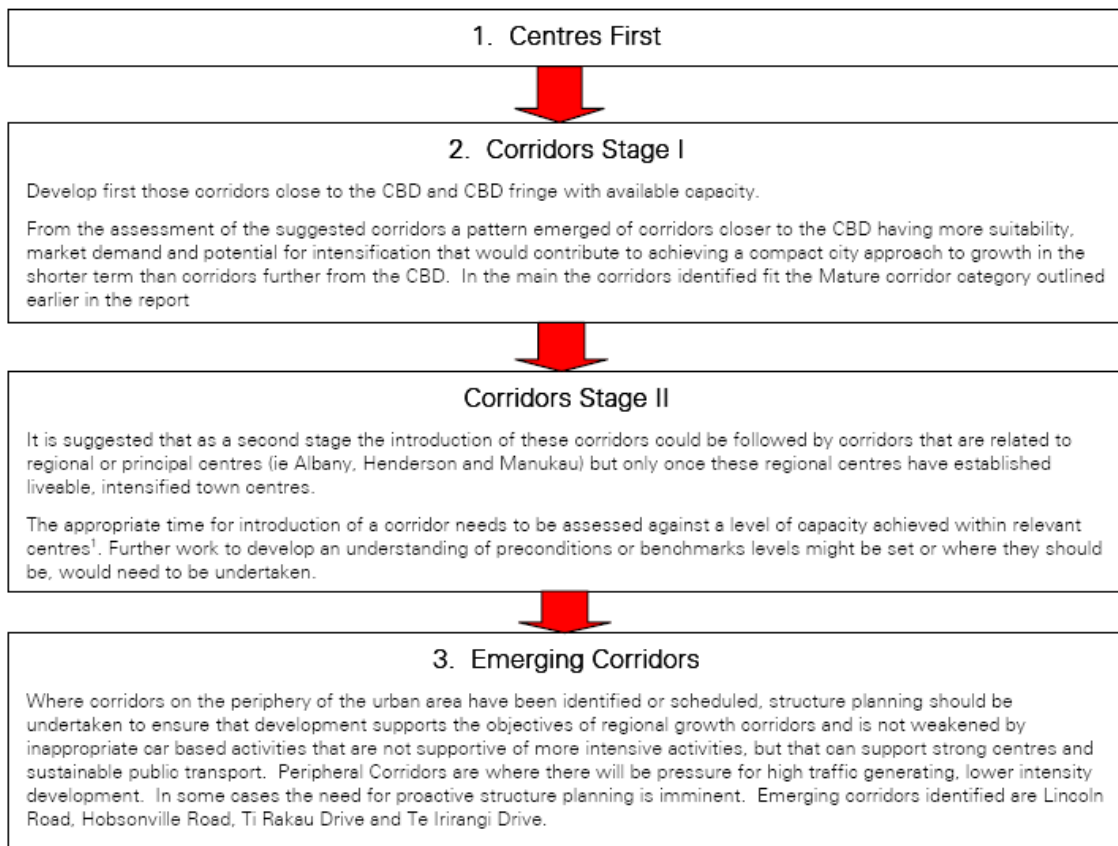
The same does not apply to emergent centres. These are constructs within neighbourhoods and are the centres that are either new and still becoming rounded in the attributes (eg diversity of activities) that they possess or they are growing and transitioning(or need to transition) into a mixed use centre.

Prioritisation will also need to take into account relationships between centres in sequencing; for instance New Lynn and Avondale are an example of two centres, formerly within different council boundaries, which have a logic for combined structure planning given their close locations and opportunities such as the Avondale Racecourse site. Similarly, there is a logic to planning for the St Lukes and Morningside centres as part of a joint structure plan, to provide better urban form (context based) and community outcomes.

8.1 Draft Auckland Plan - Prioritisation of Intensive Corridors

As previously stated, the policy approach recommended for corridors is based on that of the put forward in the report Auckland Regional Growth Corridors Report (Auckland Regional Council, 2010d). Relevant information from this is summarised in Appendix 10. In essence this report indicated that in general centres should be prioritised before corridors. Those corridors that are suggested for implementation within the timeframe of the Auckland Plan are those that are close to the City Centre and have market feasibility for good models of development to be established. The other group of corridors proposed for inclusion in the Auckland Plan are those with emergent characteristics, and consequent development pressures. For these corridors the emphasis is on developing planning frameworks to establish a basis for development patterns that will enable more sustainable mixed use environments to be created.

This overall approach for prioritising the implementation of corridors in relation to that of centres is summarised in the following diagram.



Source: Auckland Regional Council (2010d: p41)

For other potential intensive corridors, that have been identified as part of this previous work but are not recommended for inclusion in the Auckland Plan, the emphasis in the next 30 years should in the first case be on strengthening the centres along these.

9 Strategic Directives

What council can do

- ***Developing a consistent way to categorise centres across the region that is an integrated approach to understanding urban form, the role and function of centres and intensive corridors, the types of interventions that may be effective in working towards a planned future and that provides flexibility as centres grow and new centres are planned***

In the past there has been a lack of consistency in the way that we have categorised centres and corridors. The Auckland Plan provides an opportunity to provide a regional overview and consider a categorisation that also provides an aspirational element, which recognises that centres are complex and change over time. A categorisation provides a clear signal to the community, stakeholders such as utility companies and the market as to the structure and the priorities of the Auckland Council in the longer term.

- ***Developing and agreeing a list of prioritisation and sequencing for centres and intensive corridors***

Having a clear understanding of how to implement a centres strategy is essential if the Auckland Council is going to move towards a quality, compact city.

- ***Integrated approach across council many parts of council have an influence on the success of the centres policy, it will take alignment of policy and decisions to give effect to the Auckland Plan***

This approach needs to be focused on a common understanding throughout the council of the important role that our centres and corridors play in achieving liveability. From decisions about locating social infrastructure within town centres, and recognising the importance of the public realm in centre to developing policies at the Unitary Plan level that support strong centres based approach to development

- ***Developing a design led approach - Urban design guidelines that can inform framework development and provide guidance for major projects (place shaping projects), Developing a framework of appropriate design of buildings that reflects the needs of users and the community (ie reverse sensitivity and sustainability)***

There has been considerable investment in improving Auckland's Rapid Transit Network (RTN) any implementation of centres should prioritise those that adjoin the RTN in order to maximise the return on this investment and achieve sustainability gains that would result from more intensive development around stations together with higher patronage of rail and bus services.

The RTN includes the rail network and the North Shore Busway. Investment by both central government and Council has improved and continues to upgrade the system, Work includes the double tracking of the western line, station upgrades, park and ride, electrification, integrated ticketing and development of the bus way.

It is important that results are seen for these investments. For centres this means having an implementation programme that demonstrates alignment with this investment. Actions could include:

- Promoting development of planning frameworks for centres on the RTN
- Catalyst developments in centres on the RTN
- Working in partnership with ACPL where Council has landholdings to realise opportunities
- Parking policy

Manukau City Centre is an example of a major centre where investment in infrastructure, with the completion of the rail spur and station, could be the focus of implementation initiatives. The development of the MIT campus provides an opportunity to leverage off the rail development by encouraging a change in transport mode shares.

- ***Building up profiles and an information base on centres and corridors which can be used to refine planning practice - building community resilience,***

There is a wealth of information that has been built up on Auckland's centres and corridors through both regional projects and especially as part of the planning at TA level (eg the Auckland City Future Planning Framework). The future priority is to collect and store information in a way that will provide a consistent view of all the centres. There is a need to establish protocols/methodology for collecting data so that centres throughout the region can be compared and wider trends seen. This information will be able to help with the prioritisation process and also will be able to inform the review of centres policy and prioritisation criteria.

- ***Developing better implementation techniques (eg processing improvements, amalgamation of sites) that will support the centred based approach to future planning***
- ***Developing a commercial strategy that supports the centres based approach to accommodating commercial***

10 Amendments to Centres Approach post the Draft Auckland Plan

10.1 Revision of the Centres Classification - Role and Function

Criteria for classifying centres were made more robust in the final phase of the development of the Auckland Plan. The criteria were based on:

- Thresholds (future based employment + residential); and
- Urban form

Thresholds

The assessment first looked at how the centres performed in terms of their overall capacity for employment and residential. Capacity is a major factor in determining the overall role that a centre will play currently or in the future. In making this assessment the figures used were from the work undertaken as part of the Draft Development Strategy Verification Study (Auckland Council (2011a)) as this provided information from modelling together with a check from people who had experience in the particular centres.

From this work a pattern emerged of centres within each of the role and function categories having particular scale and balance or emphasis of residential and employment. They show the strongest employment focus is the CBD.

In general, the metropolitan centres showed the highest capacity, after the city centre, followed by town centres, local centres and then neighbourhood centres. There was also a logic to the distribution of employment in relation to number of dwellings when future capacity was assessed, with the balance of employment : residential gradually decreasing from the city centre to metropolitan, town, local and neighbourhood centres, ie Metropolitan centres have an emphasis on employment, town centres are more balanced while in the local centres the emphasis is on residential.

However there are centres in all the categories which vary from a standard employment : residential ratio, for this reason the median ratios were used as providing an indication of where this balance may lie for a particular category of centres (see Figure: Role and Function Classification below) . At the Metropolitan Centre level the greatest variance is shown by Sylvia Park which has a heavy emphasis on employment. That is a function of the centre and the strong employment within its catchment. Manukau is another centre with a strong employment focus. Over the period of the Auckland Plan it is anticipated that Manukau City (within the limits of the location that is impacted by the Airport noise contours) will shift from an existing employment : residential ratio of over 24 : 1 towards a more mixed use model where the ratio is anticipated to reduce to 6:1. In contrast the employment emphasis for Sylvia Park does not change significantly. It points to the need for future structure planning of the wider Sylvia Park context to look at how this centre (currently focusing on

retail), could develop in the future with a more diverse range of activities including residential, to enable a positive contribution to the quality compact city as part of the network of centres.



Urban form

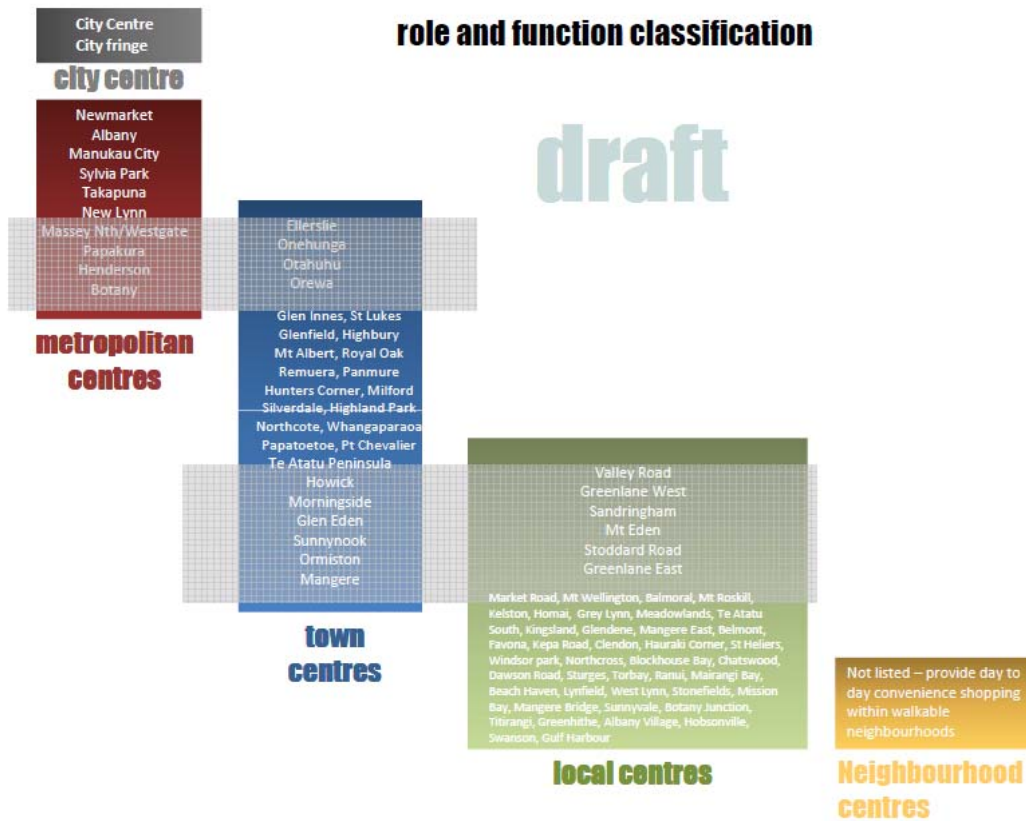
The assessment also made some provision for variances in categorisation based on where particular centres are located relative to the city centre.

It was found that for each level there are centres that clearly fit in terms of scale (future based on employment + residential – see thresholds above) and there are other centres that may be just above or below the threshold figures for that category but have other characteristics (such as urban form, roles/ functions) that mean they are more appropriate in a particular category. These are illustrated in the following figure by way of the horizontal (grey) bands.

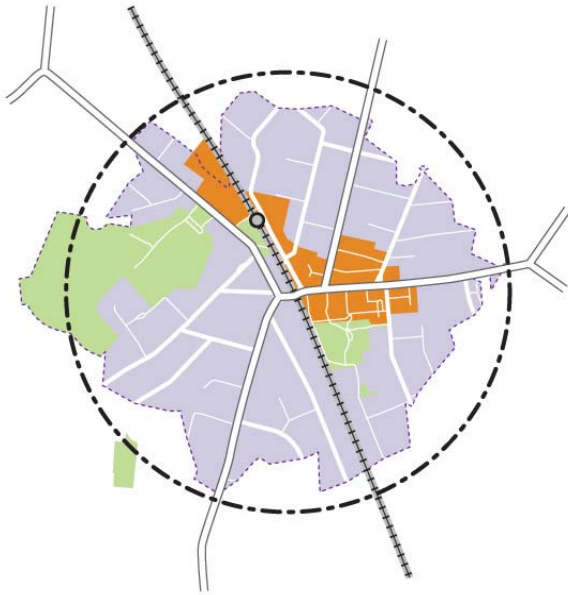
A number of patterns are apparent. At the level of the metropolitan centres a number of the centres at the lower end of the spectrum are the newer centres (the emergent centres) or those which are more remote from the City centre. They are in the metropolitan category because of their strategic locations. The weakest of the centres, at this level is Botany - its future scale, and the ratio of employment to residential are both at the lower end of what would be expected, however it is the only potential centre in the eastern part of the city which could anchor development and improvements to the public transport centre so therefore must be considered within this category.

At the town centre level Onehunga and Ellerslie have strong employment bases (bigger than the smaller metropolitan centres) but for Ellerslie the town centre element is much more at the town centre level than functioning at a metropolitan level. Onehunga is arguable in future as a metropolitan centre particularly as a basis for the rail to the airport.

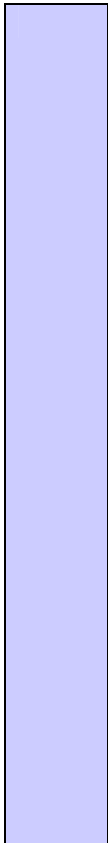
The lower end of the town centre level contains centres that are more remote from the city centre and therefore need a certain self sufficiency in the facilities and services that they are able to provide. However, the upper end of the local centres level shows a concentration of centres on the isthmus which are part of a much more connected network of centres that have access to services and facilities within the network and in the city centre.



Centre catchments



Centre - A concentrated mix of public and private activities in a defined area, including shopping, offices, public transport nodes and community facilities.



Walkable catchment - the area based on the focal point of the centre in which people can be expected to easily walk to activities in a centre. These can vary for different centres because of contextual issues. However, for the purposes of providing consistent information at a strategic level that is able to be used in on-going modelling and can provide a comparison between centres the following catchments are recommended:

Town centres - this is based on a 10 minute (800 m) radius.

Metropolitan centres - is based on a 12- 15 minute (1000 m) radius. This larger size is based on which greater ability to attract people through a wider range of services, and greater transport accessibility. Also, these centres generally are generally more substantial in depth (many town and local centres are only 1-2 blocks in depth, and so this increase in radius provides a 10 minute walk to get to the edge of the centre. Research indicates that people will walk greater distances to this to access RTN services however for the purposes of this study a conservative walking catchment was chosen.

Local centres – this is based on a 10 minute (800 m) radius. The use of this catchment reflects that many of these centres, while smaller than town centres, have access to RTN and QTN services. It will be important to consider a catchment of this size to assess and monitor opportunities that sustain and strengthen the centre and the use of public transport.

At the stage where Local Area Planning and Precinct Planning is undertaken, contextual elements (eg subdivision, block and roading patterns, topography) should be taken into account to derive a spatially distinct catchment for each centres.

10.2 Revision of the Centres Classification - Intervention Categories

The intervention categories put forward as part of the Draft Auckland Plan were:

- **Regeneration centres** - centres that require a mix of public sector actions to address economic, social and physical inequalities;
- **Emergent centres** - centres that may require some form of physical change to support continued and emergent development; and
- **Market attractive centres** - centres where there is strong market potential for growth and require limited public sector support.

A verification exercise (Auckland Plan Draft Development Strategy Verification Study, Auckland Council (2011a)) indicated that there were potential issues with the variation between the current and the aspirational categorisation of centres not clearly signalled. This was also apparent through further examination of the Boffas report (Prioritising Centres: Analysis for the Centres & Corridors Workstream, Boffa Miskell (2011)).

Accordingly, an alternative approach was considered as part of further work following the release of the Draft Auckland Plan. This approach refined the definition of the term “emergent centres” and suggested that this was more appropriately used as an overlay in conjunction with the role and function categories. The definition was widened to identify emergent centres as being “*which are those that are either in a formative stage of development or require significant change through redevelopment to support their transition to more intensive, mixed-use centres.*”

The two intervention categories carried forward were:

Regeneration centres – centres that require a mix of public sector actions to address economic, social and physical inequalities.

Market attractive centres – centres where there is strong market potential for growth and which require limited public sector support

For all centres, a planning framework is seen as being the minimum requirement to enable development which will move Auckland towards the quality compact city outcomes envisaged by the Auckland Plan. For market attractive centres this may be the only intervention required to enable development. However, for centres further towards the regeneration end of the continuum a more extensive mix of mechanisms such as land amalgamations, exemplar developments and improvements to public space amenity may be required.

The mix of interventions required is more appropriately considered when spatial planning of individual centres is undertaken through local area or precinct planning. There is also recognition that the market attractiveness of particular centres will vary over time. For the purposes of the Auckland Plan the research undertaken by SD4 and Jasmax (*Auckland Plan Total Auckland Development Potential Final Report* Studio D4 and Jasmax(2011)) was used as a basis for

understanding which centres were the most market attractive. The centres that had the greatest market attractiveness were:

Ormiston, Albany, Maukau City, Sylvia Park, Silverdale, Takapuna, Milford, Newmarket, Botany, Remuera.

10.3 Revision of Approach to Intensive Corridors

As part of the work undertaken in the verification exercise (Auckland Plan Draft Development Strategy Verification Study, Auckland Council (2011a)) it was found that the capacity of the corridors was less than had been previously ascribed. The taxonomy used in the study highlighted that there were issues with overlaps and few areas that were solely related to the corridor element of the centres and corridors network. The study identified two corridors with potential opportunities these were Great South Road (Isthmus section) and Lincoln Road. The difference in the patterns of development between corridors on the isthmus, near the city centre, and those in newer parts of the city closer to the periphery of the city was also noted as part of this study.

As a result of this work, an alternative approach to accommodating growth as part of a network of centres and corridors was considered. This alternative approach was to consider the corridors in the inner isthmus are redefined to have an emphasis on the development of centres as a sequence of interrelated centres which are able, through location on a major public transport route (ie QTN and or RTN) to maximise access to services and facilities for local communities. The pattern would emphasise place (centre) as opposed to movement (corridor). It would also acknowledge the strong character and heritage values that may exist in conjunction with main transport routes (eg Dominion Road).

For corridors outside the isthmus the alternative approach was to recast them to emphasise the economic opportunities that they provide, primarily in terms of employment (through business areas) and the different response that is required to make them successful. The challenge for these corridors is seen as being the ability to provide a planning framework, through Local Area Planning to stimulate a land use pattern that strengthens nodes of activity along the length of the corridor spine thereby improving the sustainability of public transport provision.

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