

1. This is the feedback of the St Heliers/Glendowie Residents Association.
2. The points below are in addition to Attachment 2 which was prepared by the association and the Save Our St Heliers group to assist members of both organisations and picks up points which have arisen since attachment 2 was written.
3. Many of us are sceptical about the need to plan for an additional 1m population. We understand council has used the “high growth” projection within the high/medium/low range provided by Statistics NZ rather than the “medium” growth figure as would be normal practice in a situation such as this unless there are very good grounds to do so and the council does not have good grounds. Even the medium projection is likely to be high because under this council's planning policies the city is likely to become less liveable rather than more liveable and encourage reverse migration to other centres, especially Hamilton and Tauranga. Auckland is already facing economic issues with a relatively low 63.4% of adult population having a job vs. the high end of approximately 80% for two other areas. The “economic powerhouse” is less of a powerhouse than we are told by council and has some weaknesses in its foundations.
4. We are appalled at the mistakes and poor judgments in the UP. We note that the deputy mayor has referred to the UP as a “draft draft” and the mayor has called it a “draft draft draft”. We need to see a new draft with a simplified presentation. Obviously finalising the UP requires much more time and care than is being allowed by the official timetable. We appreciate the stated willingness by the council to listen to feedback and make amendments, but not the rushed framework to notify a final plan by September. The UP and associated documents are large, complex and not very accessible to those of us who are not specialist in these matters. In addition the documents and council's explanations of the UP contain far too much PR spin and too little substance. Rather than notify in September, council should go back to those communities who have major concerns and let their Local Boards develop new individual centre plans with assistance from planners. We note that important aspects of the recent update of St Heliers centre plan conducted by the Orakei Local Board have been ignored. (We understand some other individual centre plans have already been initiated.)
5. We accept that there is a need for an appropriate degree of intensification. (We note that intensification has always happened in Auckland under previous planning regimes.) We are very concerned however at the how intensification in our area would be achieved under the UP. The UP has too little regard for the reasonable capacity of some areas to absorb more population having regard for geography and infrastructure. For example the roads around St Heliers are mostly quite narrow and there is limited scope for widening or other activity to increase their capacity. In the St Heliers/Eastern Bays area too much intensification is proposed for the areas bounded by Cliff Road and Clarendon Street and the nearby flat coastal areas including Kohimarama. It is not acceptable for high buildings to be placed along the coast for a number of reasons:
 - a. The approach is not consistent with the purpose and provisions of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Protection Act. More building close to the waterfront is sure to increase stormwater runoff and sewage overflows.
 - b. Aesthetics. A wall of high buildings along Tamaki Drive and the waterfront will be a major eyesore and result in a serious reduction in amenity for residents behind the coastal wall. A better

planning approach widely recognised elsewhere is to have a staged increase in height rising back from the coast and, where possible, higher buildings located near hills to minimise loss of views.

c. The flat land along Tamaki Drive is nearly all reclaimed land with a high water table. It is highly susceptible to earthquake liquefaction. Higher buildings will increase problems arising from liquefaction when it happens, as it inevitably will. Other councils around NZ are already taking action to reduce concentration of buildings on higher earthquake risk land.

d. Tamaki Drive is already at reasonable capacity. The recent completely unnecessary interventions by Auckland Transport have reduced that capacity and we are concerned at the prospect of more actions of that sort.

6. We have no objections to the further medium rise type intensification planned for the area immediately behind the St Heliers Village which is on solid land and would cause fewer issues. In fact the area designated could perhaps be increased. The intensification proposed along Kepa Road and the area around the Eastridge shopping centre appears logical but should be accompanied by a widening of Kepa Road which is already at capacity at peak traffic times. We have not consulted our stakeholders on this, but it would appear that there are other areas near the rail line which would be suitable for medium rise intensification, perhaps including the block of vacant former Selwyn College land bordering the college. We are keen to see a new train station behind Selwyn College which would service the proposed new housing and which Eastern Bays residents could access by using mini-bus type services. The existing configuration and management of public transport in our area does not work well.

7. We were very surprised and disturbed by the late disclosure that the proposed 8m height storey mixed housing zone could become a 10m 3 storey zone in certain circumstances and that applications would be non-notifiable but would be decided by planners. 10m might be suitable in some instances but this must be notifiable. Our experiences with planners and developers certainly does not lead us to trust their judgements on such matters. We wonder what other important exceptions are buried in the fine print of the UP.

8. Ideally we would want to minimise the amount of discretion within the UP. We prefer a plan which is highly prescriptive and legally binding so that everyone knows where they stand rather than having to put up with the time wasting and expensive process involved in the exercise of discretion. The kind of traditional Auckland approach with lot of planner discretion is an inefficient and corrupting approach. It also stacks the deck against ordinary homeowners and ratepayers and in favour of developers and others with deep pockets who are able to treat the published plan as just a starting point for negotiation.

8. Attachment 2 makes a number of points about our major issue and that is protecting the character of the St Heliers Village, especially the issue of building height. The character of the Village has already been irreparably damaged by the two new large and high buildings on Turua Street and on the corner of Tamaki Drive and Maheke Street. At the Council UP briefing in St Heliers on 8 April, Ms Pirrit indicated that to reduce the height limit from 12.5m to 9m would be unfair to Village land owners who would lose value and that it had been in place a long time. (1993 was mentioned. We think it was a bit later.) Our response to that is summarised as follows:

a. The 12.5m height decision has been shown to be a bad decision and should be able to be reversed as have other planning mistakes. We note the example of a designation for a supermarket in Warkworth which was removed after residents made the case that the location was not suitable. Land owners know that there are risks in zoning designation and that they stand to gain or lose from changes. The height designation is not a property right.

b. We also note that properties in other areas including the Parade just across Vellenoweth Green from Goldie Street will be down-zoned in the UP and presumably those areas will lose value. Other land owners will lose value due to UP up zoning changes of land near them causing shading and loss of views.

c. Height is the major factor in the destruction of character of the Village. Height and bulk detract from the seaside village character and change the nature of the Village as a local service centre. Our survey showed that overwhelmingly (80%plus) residents do not want this height. Surely they have some rights to the "quiet enjoyment of their environment."

9. Also at the 8 April meeting the expansion of the St Heliers Centre to Goldie Street and Lombard Street was justified on the basis that this expansion was foreshadowed by the Future Planning Framework undertaken in 2009/2010 and consultations around that. We have no record that the Resident's Association was asked for its views or consulted on this matter. Had we been, we would certainly have objected. This designation should be changed on the following grounds:

a. These two areas should be retained as residential because of the nature of the surrounding environment. This applies especially to Goldie Street bordering as it does Vellenoweth Green which is a very special recreational amenity.

b. The St Heliers Village as a service centre has grown only very slowly over the past 30 years because it services a relatively mature area. It has spare capacity now and will not need this much additional area for shops and others facilities to service the locals. In addition these are poor locations for shops or other service facilities because only one side of the street can be developed for this purpose. This means that the commercialisation will inevitably focus on bars and restaurants to service non-residents with all the attendant booze related problems this can bring. We do not want to become another Mission Bay.

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