

Beca Urban Scrawl



Rupert Hodson

Editorial

Welcome to our Christmas edition of Urban Scrawl. This edition focuses on the very topical themes of Governance and Spatial Planning; and showcases a number of projects demonstrating our approach to a spatial planning process as well as some successful examples of integrated planning.

A developing momentum towards rationalisation and centralisation of governance at a local level - 'piloted' by the Local Government (Auckland Law Reform Act) and the legislative requirement for the new Auckland Council to develop a Spatial Plan for the region - presents challenges and opportunities and creates an exciting environment for planners and urban designers in this time of significant change.

Expectations are high regarding what these Auckland local governance changes will deliver and what the spatial plan is anticipated to provide as a road map for transformation, both for Auckland and in terms of the implications for other regions throughout the country. It is our responsibility as professionals operating in this changing environment to embrace the spirit of the principles of the spatial planning process to deliver better social,

environmental, cultural and economic outcomes, through an integrated comprehensive approach to planning and design.

It is also worth noting the implications of the Resource Management Act (RMA) Phase II reforms during this time of change. These focus in part on improving how the RMA deals with planning within our urban areas and infrastructure delivery; and these particular aspects are likely to be subject of much discussion and debate in the coming year.

I hope you find our articles relevant and interesting examples of how Beca's planning and urban design team is engaging in an integrated planning approach with our clients on a number of projects in different parts of Australasia. The authors of the articles would welcome the opportunity to discuss their project experiences and learnings with you, so please feel free to contact them directly.

We trust 2010 has been a successful and rewarding year for you. All of us at Beca Planning wish you a restful and relaxing Christmas and New Year holiday. We look forward to working with you again in 2011.

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Spatial planning and urban design

Spatial planning is the subject of much discussion at the moment – including discussion about what it actually is. We see spatial planning as a way to deliver sustainable, equitable and efficient neighbourhoods, towns, cities and regions; through organising the physical layout and also structuring the social, cultural and economic aspects of the place.

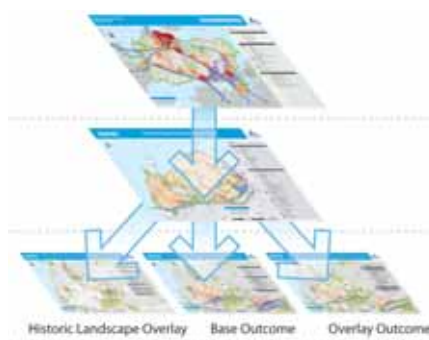
This is an important aspect of urban design and planning, as at its heart is a desire to create opportunities for all those who live and work in the city – and it is particularly important as our towns and cities grow. Building on the distinct qualities and differences between communities, spatial planning and urban design have the potential to foster new relationships and celebrate existing and new cultural experiences. Aspects we consider in proposing innovative solutions for urban growth include appropriate working and living densities, sustainable transport systems, high quality urban environments, well connected public spaces and well located social and cultural institutions.

In working to enhance people’s everyday lives within towns and cities, Beca’s multidisciplinary urban design

team works closely with social and regeneration planners, economists, GIS specialists, transport engineers and other consultants. Our understanding of both the local and regional context and our ability to apply spatial thinking, planning and urban design at varying scales has been integral to our projects.

Several of our projects have facilitated a range of outcomes contributing to spatial planning, including:

- Assisting to prepare Auckland City Council’s award winning Future Planning Framework
- Further refining the Future Planning Framework methodology so it can



be used more widely under the new Auckland Council

- Preparing an Urban Design Framework and assisting to prepare the business case for the CBD Rail Link
- Preparing urban growth frameworks, criteria for intensification and design principles for Waipa’s town centres
- Working with Beca’s Melbourne office on the St Alban’s Connectivity Strategy, and
- Developing the Urban Design Framework for the Kumeu-Huapai Transportation Study.

We are delighted that Beca’s planning and urban design team has recently been commissioned to prepare a Local Area Plan for Hamilton City Centre, which will be built around a spatial vision, and are looking forward to working collaboratively with Hamilton City Council on this exciting project.

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Proposed Auckland CBD Rail Link aims to reinvigorate culture and economy



▲ CBD Rail Link Phase 1: Proposed new station locations have the potential to substantially increase accessibility to the Auckland CBD.

Auckland CBD Rail Link is an exciting proposal for a new rail connection running through Auckland’s CBD, a project that has the potential to stimulate growth by re-imagining the City’s spatial design and fostering new opportunities for economic, social and cultural development.

In 2009 KiwiRail and Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) commissioned the APB&B consortium (AECOM, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Beca) to determine the route and station locations for the CBD Rail Link. This study will form the basis for a Notice of Requirement for the necessary designations to implement the project and provide KiwiRail and ARTA with a business case for one of Auckland’s most challenging and exciting infrastructure projects to date.

Beca’s planning and urban design team has been involved in a continuing process of consultation with key stakeholders including Auckland City Council and Auckland Regional Council (now the Auckland Council), NZ Transport Agency, Ministry of Transport, NZ Treasury, emergency service providers and key infrastructure providers. This process sought to engage these stakeholders prior to design and commenced with a detailed analysis of the existing environment during Phase 1 of the overall project.

This analysis, which also assisted to provide the urban design inputs into the multi criteria option assessment for the proposed CBD Rail Link route and station locations, included gaining a sound understanding of the physical and cultural environment, opportunities and issues; and existing and future residential and employment populations based on development potential within walking distance of the various station locations.

Building upon the analysis, the Phase 1 outcomes of the project identified a route that was taken forward for further investigation and costing. Now underway on Phase 2, the Project team is examining the effects, costs and benefits of a CBD rail link and working through a collaborative process to inform a comprehensive business case. Anticipated benefits being analysed include renewal and growth opportunities for the Karangahape Road and Newton areas, sustained inner city growth, public realm and pedestrian environment enhancements, greater potential for integrated transport modes; and potential for enhancing accessibility to key mid-town destinations such as Auckland University, AUT, the City Art Gallery and Library, Auckland Council and Aotea Square.

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A future planning framework methodology to suit a super city

As part of Auckland City's vision to 2050, the future planning framework (FPF) is a recent example of an integrated and tiered approach to spatial planning.

The FPF was originally going to be used to inform processes such as the district plan review and future capital works programmes. With the 'Super City's' planned amalgamation of local authorities, it was decided not to proceed with a new isthmus district plan for the Auckland City Council area. Instead, the Council decided to showcase the future planning framework project as a potential spatial planning tool for the new Auckland Council.

In 2010, Beca's planning team held workshops with Auckland City Council staff and subsequently prepared a report on the FPF Methodology. The purpose was to

outline Auckland City Council's learning's from the process of preparing the FPF and provide a resource and methodology that can be used to assist and inform the new Auckland Council when undertaking its Spatial Plan, as required by the legislation developed to create the 'Super City'.

The report provides an overview of the FPF process and outlines each of the key phases of its methodology, including the purpose, fundamental aspects of the phase, a suggested model (updated and refined based on the lessons learnt) and key recommendations.

A key topic covered in the report is governance. Political governance and project governance are noted as critical to help ensure all Council sectors will be involved and buy into the process.

It also provides an accountability framework for business units to develop strategies and make decisions in accordance with the spatial plan.

The FPF was the winner of the New Zealand Planning Institute 2010 Nancy Northcroft Award for Planning Practice. Penny Pirrit, Group Manager City Planning, Auckland City Council (now Regional and Local Planning Manager for the new Auckland Council) was responsible for the delivery of the FPF and made this comment: "Because of the tight timeframes, we wouldn't have been where we are today without the help and support of Beca's team."

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Using GIS and spatial planning for the new Auckland Spatial Plan

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have a large part to play in the development of the new Auckland Spatial Plan – both in informing the Spatial Plan development process and in the ongoing Spatial Plan implementation.

During the discussions being held on the processes and components of the new Auckland Spatial Plan, two core pillars of GIS will need to be put in place to support the process and the document.

Spatial data management

Spatial planning is based upon spatial information, which is only as good as its management and metadata. In his speech to the NZ Planning Institute in September the Hon. Nick Smith stated "the spatial plan must be based upon sound evidence". This means the guardians of spatial data

need to have rigorous (defendable) spatial data management plans in place, including comprehensive and accessible metadata (data about the data). The metadata records aspects such as its source, accuracy, acquisition method, currency and accessibility. While it is a sometimes less 'glamorous' aspect to GIS, employing a structured and comprehensive metadata database for all aspects of spatial information informing the spatial plan will be vital to its success.

Spatial data integration

The Auckland Council and its subsidiary council-controlled organisations and community-focussed local boards have a collective responsibility to encourage integration of spatial data across many facets of society. Underlying this will be

agreements on how the information is collated, stored, maintained and retrieved – and how each of these spatial datasets from different contributing agencies will integrate. Collaboration with the key contributing agencies (for example the NZ Transport Agency) will be important to assist in informing the spatial datasets and develop mechanisms for their access.

The currency of spatial information, its integrity and management – and the accessibility to this information – will be essential elements to the long-term success of the Spatial Plan.

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An integrated design solution for the Kumeu to Huapai Corridor



▲ SH16 – existing situation: The strategy seeks to improve the strategic transport network while also addressing safety concerns and enhancing amenity

Beca was commissioned by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) to undertake a transportation study for SH16, between the townships of Kumeu and Huapai in West Auckland, an area identified for urban growth.

The state highway functions as both a regional route of strategic importance and a main street; and there are a range of safety, amenity and infrastructure issues that need to be addressed to deliver a better connected transportation network and improved urban form.

According to Jamie Swan, Associate – Planning, “Without affirmative action in terms of infrastructure provision and

land use change, there is a risk that the existing planning framework will continue to allow increased levels of car use, increasing pressure on SH16, further sprawl along SH16 and a lack of centres to the two townships”.

In response to the identified issues, opportunities and constraints, Beca’s multi-disciplinary team developed a set of design principles around the role and identity of Kumeu and Huapai, land use, transportation and urban form (including public space).

Three high level concepts were defined and evaluated against a ‘do minimum’ scenario. The preferred option was refined into a preferred strategy and

integrated transport package by considering aspects of other options which performed well. A high level of stakeholder and community engagement provided input and validation at each key stage of the study.

Urban design issues have been paramount to this study. Accordingly, an Urban Design Framework brings together the integrated transport and land use planning options discussed in the report and recommends an overall strategic direction for Kumeu-Huapai. The Framework is a guidance document for the NZTA and for consideration by the new Auckland Council in developing their District Plan (current and future plan changes) and in the development of the Regional Spatial Plan.

As described by NZTA project manager Tim Conder, “While some of these strategies are beyond the scope of NZTA to deliver, they are included in the framework to illustrate the importance of an integrated design solution for the area and to show how the specific corridor recommendations align with local and regional policies and strategies”.

The study was completed in October 2010.

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Southern Sector Study – helping to manage growth in Hamilton

The Southern Sector Study involved development of a set of recommendations about the land use pattern and infrastructure planning necessary to help manage land to the immediate south of Hamilton City over the next 50 years.

The purpose of the study was to:

- Provide a review of and comment on the land use and infrastructure issues facing the area from an holistic and purist planning perspective (i.e. ignoring respective territorial authority boundaries) within and beyond the Future Proof study period (to 2061)
- Develop a recommended land use pattern for this area based on information received from Councils, landowners, stakeholders and the general public
- Provide recommendations on future infrastructure planning and provision to support the recommended land use plan, and
- Provide recommendations on actions that should be undertaken (including by who and when) to give effect to the land use plan.

Key recommendations and outcomes of the study have included:

- Reconsideration of recent practice to use the minimum wastewater disposal areas of 2,500m² as justification for minimum lot size in rural areas; and the potential cumulative impacts of doing so both on soil and river health and the removal of land from the rural land supply
- Confirmation of the location and function of planned roading infrastructure considering the future intended urban growth in this area
- The development potential in and around the Hamilton Airport and the nature and mix of activities that should be encouraged or discouraged from this area with a recommended focus on the clustering of similar activities
- The need to protect the long term ability for transport linkages (both roading, rail and air) to be identified and developed within and through the area, and



- The need to consider wastewater, water supply and stormwater in a cross boundary sense rather than at an individual council level.

Key outcomes of the study will assist to inform the Regional Policy Statement, the District Plans and the I&R phase of the Southern Links arterial roading network.

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Developing a sound economic development strategy for Lake Wendouree

The Lake Wendouree precinct lies one kilometre north east of the Ballarat Central Business District, approximately one and a half hours north of Melbourne. Hosting an array of public assets including the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and local and regional parks, the area is recognised for its value to tourism and as a community open-space resource. The precinct is surrounded by historical housing and also connects to the city’s primary residential growth corridor.

Lake Wendouree has experienced a period of drought and has run dry. The City of Ballarat and the Victorian State Government have committed to refilling the Lake by late 2011. The Lake Wendouree Precinct Economic Development Strategy aims to leverage off the return of water to the lake, with the core vision to “attract and facilitate appropriate tourism and

commercial development that protects and enhances the identified role and character of the Lake Wendouree Precinct”.

This vision is supported by five key objectives covering the areas of economy, environment, community and recreation, access and mobility and statutory framework.

A trans-Tasman Beca team comprising planning, urban design and architecture as well as Tim Nott Economic Analysis and Strategy will be providing a framework concept and implementation plan, with the aim to direct preferred use, management and development in the Precinct. Given the value of the precinct as a community asset and shared recreation and civic space, the project needs extensive consultation with users of the lake and surrounding environs,

stakeholders and the wider Ballarat community. The consultation programme includes facilitated group workshops, a public information session at Ballarat City Council’s annual Springfest event and public feedback forms.

Due for completion in December 2010, the project aims to capitalise on the existing value and attributes of the Lake Wendouree Precinct and form a conceptual framework to guide further detailed investigation of opportunities for sensitive development that will enhance and add value to the Precinct.

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This vision is supported by five key objectives covering the areas of economy, environment, community and recreation, access and mobility and statutory framework.

◀ Lake Wendouree Land Use Plan: The economic strategy for Lake Wendouree is strongly inter-related to existing and proposed land uses within the precinct.

St Albans local area connections strategy, Brimbank City Council

Located approximately 20 kilometres from Melbourne’s Central Business District, the St Albans local area is characterised by an ethnically diverse, ageing and socio-economically disadvantaged population.

The area is dissected by a railway line and power transmission lines and adjoins the Western Ring Road and Western Highway. The area therefore simultaneously functions as a thoroughfare, key destination and, most importantly, a home. These spatial and land use characteristics create challenging and complex barriers to mobility and accessibility.

A multi-disciplinary team comprising Beca personnel from both sides of the Tasman and Collaborations Pty Ltd are currently

preparing the St Albans Local Area Connections Strategy in partnership with Brimbank City Council. This project aims to deliver a practical framework for improving accessibility and connections in St Albans by drawing upon land-use planning, urban design, social planning and transport planning disciplines.

Our team has undertaken extensive consultation with residents from a range of cultural backgrounds, age groups and physical abilities. We have prepared a Discussion Paper for Council identifying key accessibility issues in the area including access for people with limited mobility, walking and cycling opportunities, the public realm, quality and connectivity of open space, public transport and traffic

and safety and security. The outcomes of the Discussion Paper is planned to inform the completion of the Local Area Connections Strategy.

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People News



Congratulations to our Associates

A round of recently announced appointments at Beca Planning has strengthened the leadership and technical capabilities of the New Zealand and Australian business lines.

Appointments to Associate recognise the technical and managerial skills each individual has developed in their discipline and acknowledges his or her contribution and potential to add great value in the

future. Each Associate is tasked to inspire others to share Beca's vision and help build our business. Collectively these people represent the diversity of Beca's competence and the wide and varied projects in which we are involved, with each also demonstrating our core values of Partnership, Tenacity, Enjoyment and Care - the foundations of our One Beca culture.

Left to right

Nathan Baker // Wellington Planning team // Section Manager

Sarah Fitzgerald // Tauranga Planning team // Section Manager

Jo Cannington // Melbourne Planning team

Jamie Swan // Auckland Planning team

Lucie Desrosiers // Wellington Urban Design team

New senior staff - bringing valuable strategic experience to Beca's planning and urban design team



Hywel Edwards

Hywel has recently joined the Wellington Planning team as a Senior Planner. He has extensive experience in the scoping, preparation and acquisition of resource consent applications and assessment of environmental effects, as well as the drafting, negotiation and implementation of workable resource consent conditions. Hywel's resource consent work has related to a wide range of activities including infrastructure (in particular rail), bulk water supply, hydro-power, waste management and land development.



Sarah Duffell

Sarah has recently joined the Wellington Planning team as an Urban Designer. Sarah is a qualified and experienced planning and urban design specialist with 18 years' experience in New Zealand and the UK. She specialises in urban design projects, urban design assessment and policy formulation. Sarah has particular expertise in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), having received a Churchill Fellowship to travel to the USA and Canada to research this topic.



Shadrach Rolleston

Shad recently joined the Tauranga Planning team and brings a wealth of experience in working with Tangata Whenua and resource management issues. He has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of Tikanga Maori and Maori processes, as well as resource and strategic planning, project management and cultural impact assessment. Shad has established relationships with the iwi and hapu of Tauranga and will be an invaluable member to the project team.



Tim Ryder

Tim joined the Auckland Planning team in June this year as a Senior Planner. He has seven years' experience in both local government and consultancy environments and is experienced in providing planning and development consultancy services to a range of corporate clients in the United Kingdom and Australia. In recent years Tim has specialised in the provision of development planning strategies and the management of commercial developments from project inception to planning approval.



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New Plymouth
Christchurch
Tauranga

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