

1. PURPOSE OF 'CENTRAL AREA PROPOSALS

"Central Area Proposals" is not a plan for the centre of Auckland, and has not been accepted by the Council as such.

This document has been produced to put preliminary planning proposals to the public, who are now invited to criticize and offer constructive comment. All proposals and comments will be considered by the Council before the plan for the Central Area is prepared.

2. THE CALL FOR A CENTRAL AREA PLAN

Today there are few vistas about the centre of the city which do not contain the silhouette of a crane attending a rising structure for new office or university building. The motorways have been brought to the Central Area, and carved clay embankments now surround the centre as the motorways are being continued to connect in a loop around it. Port facilities are being extended and modernized. Within ten years a harbour bridge has been constructed, and then widened from four to eight lanes. Consideration is being given to a second harbour bridge. New shops and shopping arcades have been opened and Vulcan Lane has been made into a pedestrian mall. There are few weeks when the proposed bus/rapid rail transportation system does not feature prominently in the Press. All of this amounts to considerable evidence of the continued development of the city and its centre.

The city and its centre is the result of many plans made by individuals and business

organisations as well as the local bodies and the government. However, there is growing concern that these separate plans are not being adequately co-ordinated; and a plan made to solve one problem may, in itself, create further problems. There is an awareness that the Central Area, as it is developing, is not all that it should be, and that there is a need for more detailed overall plan.

Development within the city is controlled by the District Scheme, which zones properties, sets down ordinances for the control of development, and designates proposed public works and facilities. However, for the Central Area, the District Scheme is out of date. In the recent review of the District Scheme only nominal changes were made, as the preparation of a more detailed plan was already under way. In recent years few of the larger buildings in the Central Area have complied with the relevant ordinances, and therefore have had to be given special consideration for approval as a conditional use.

The need for a Central Area Plan became particularly obvious on receipt of the two transportation reports by DeLeuw, Cather & Company in 1965. It seemed that the proposed motorways would funnel even higher concentrations of traffic onto streets which were already heavily trafficked.

A special duties planning team had been set up to, amongst other things, prepare a plan for the Central Area. Also, in 1966, Colin Buchanan & Partners, of London, were retained by the Council "to

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advise upon the re-arrangement of the inner city streets consequent upon the motorways", together with other aspects of planning which they considered relevant. The main recommendation of the Buchanan report was that there was no avoiding a complex design study to see how the traffic, including the location of car parks, questions of servicing buildings, fixing of bus routes, and the form, design, bulk and use of buildings, can be dealt with in the central city. In the consultants' opinion, the Central Area study for Auckland was probably the most important planning task in the country.

3. THE PLANNING METHOD

In essence, planning is a matter of analysing past and present conditions to reach an understanding of what is happening, making judgments as to what should happen, then deciding on the most suitable ways and means by which the desired objectives can be achieved.

Normally there is no shortage of ideas as to what should happen, although there may be a shortage of good ideas. Generally the most difficult part of planning is in evaluating different ideas and choosing those which will lead to the most effective course of action.

Some aspects of planning, such as planning for traffic, are relatively objective, and it is becoming increasingly possible for planners, with the aid of computers, to calculate the effect of various traffic proposals.

Other aspects of planning in which it is equally necessary to make decisions, are necessarily of a subjective nature. The aspirations people have for their city, the desired qualities, and how much should be spent to achieve them are areas where public comment would be of real assistance in helping the Council to make decisions that will result in the "best" plans for the future.

"Central Area Proposals" describes past and present conditions, analyses problems and offers solutions. When more than one solution seems appropriate, alternative solutions have been offered and evaluated as far as has been possible up until the time of publication. The technical evaluation of various alternatives is to continue during the period that the proposals are being considered and judged by the people for whom the plan is being prepared.

4. GENERAL TRENDS

Auckland is one of the most prosperous cities, if not the most prosperous city, in one of the world's most fortunate countries. New Zealand has enjoyed one of the highest standards of living and although its future rate of growth may not be able to match that of some larger, manufacturing countries, we can confidently expect increasing prosperity.

The Targets Committee of the National Development Conference in 1969 recommended that a target growth rate of 4½% per annum in real gross national product be confirmed. This rise in the gross national product would result in a standard of living (as

measured by real consumption per head) rising at an average rate of 2½%. This means that it is expected that the gross national product will double within 22 years, and the average standard of living will double within 40 years.

The result of the increased production and economic growth should only be good. Greater affluence will result in more leisure time, more education, more travel, and more social and cultural activity, as well as more material comfort and convenience. More people will be able to choose goods, services, or a way of life which they cannot afford at the present time.

The increased prosperity will be coupled with new scientific and technological advances, which are being made at an ever increasing rate. New developments in communications, transport and building in particular will have their effect on the city. At this time it is possible to foresee what some of these developments may be, but it is more difficult to foretell to what extent and in what way they will be accepted and decided by the public.

It can be generally expected that increased affluence will lead to greater mobility and a greater demand for space. Improved communications will make the need to travel to communicate with people less necessary. On the other hand, improved transport will make it easier to travel to meet people.

The Physical Environment Committee of the National Development Conference reported that "the extent of change should not be underestimated. In the period to 1986 population will expand by more than 40%.

This population will be more mobile than ever before, as by that time there will be one vehicle for every two people in New Zealand and, on the average, people will probably be wealthier and have more leisure than we have at present."

They further reported that "it is quite possible that the environmental changes of the next 17 years will be as great as those caused by European occupation of New Zealand to the present time. Projected expenditure gives some measure of the force of change to be applied. In urban expansion, some \$4,000 million will be spent."

The prospects of the future are so enormous as to be overwhelming. However, as the plans of the present time can only be realized in the future, it is important to anticipate the future as well as we can, rather than to make plans to solve only the problems of today.

5. A STRONG OR WEAK CENTRAL AREA?

It is of importance, initially, to reach an understanding as to whether to plan for a city with a strong centre containing a concentration of most of the city's commercial, administrative and cultural activities, or whether such activities should be spread in sub-centres about the urban region. Within limitations, it is the choice between a New York or Los Angeles type of city.

Generally, a strong central area provides the most convenient location of activities for a city dependent on public transportation, whereas a greater dispersal of

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activities is more convenient within cities where a large proportion of all trips is made by private motor vehicles. Cities with large central areas, like New York, Chicago and, to a lesser extent, Sydney and Melbourne, developed in an age before the widespread use of private motor vehicles. In recent years even these cities are experiencing a relative decline in the importance of their central areas. The presence of a well developed public transportation system has not prevented decentralisation to any appreciable degree.

As Auckland has already developed in a decentralised manner, it would be unrealistic to expect to undo what has already been done. Also, the forces for decentralisation are so strong that controls to prevent it would be unacceptable. For example, to restrict most future retailing growth to the Central Area would seriously affect the existing freedom of shoppers to shop where they want, and of shopkeepers to locate where they expect their customers would like to shop.

The urban area is made up of a multiplicity of competing local authorities, each responsible for the planning of its own area. It is unlikely that any local authority would undertake to limit further commercial development within its area, even if this was in accordance with a Regional Plan - which it is not.

The Regional Plan, as submitted for approval, has a policy that the development of commercial centres shall be such as to best service the population of the region, consistent with the economic operation of these centres. It is proposed that the

central business area remain as the main centre of retail, commercial and administration activities, and major cultural facilities serving the whole region, and that there shall be secondary centres containing a full range of retail uses, a substantial range of services, offices and major community facilities, within the outer parts of the urban area. In addition, there would be suburban and local shopping centres.

For these three reasons (the desirability of freedom of choice, the competition of local bodies, and the proposed provisions of the Regional Plan), even if it were desired to limit all further commercial, administrative and cultural development to the Central Area, it would be neither technically nor legally possible, nor would it be in the best interests of the city and its people.

On the other hand, a policy to prevent further growth in the Central Area is equally undesirable. Although further growth could be prevented by limiting access to the Central Area by motorways and streets, failing to improve public transport, not providing parking, and restricting the intensity of future development, there are good reasons for not taking these steps.

The city has an investment of \$140 million in buildings alone in its Central Area (1966 valuation) and this investment should be protected. At the present time there is no great degree of congestion or overcrowding, and it is easily possible to plan for foreseeable growth. Again, it would be an unnecessary limitation of

freedom to restrict this growth. It can also be expected that most people want a Central Area which is vital and progressive as a focal point for the city, and as an interesting and stimulating place to come to.

Therefore, while it is unreasonable to plan for great growth in the Central Area, it is reasonable to plan for moderate growth. This growth will have to be made in competition with suburban centres, and the Central Area will have to compete by making the most of its advantages, and overcoming its relative disadvantages. It will be necessary to plan to make it a more attractive place to come to, and an easier place to come to.



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6. GOALS

First order

1. Plan for the continued growth of the Central Area so that it retains its eminence as the main commercial, retail, administrative, entertainment, social, cultural and symbolic centre of the city.
2. Make it a better place to come to (more convenient, attractive, efficient, comfortable, exciting, beautiful, brighter).
3. Make it an easier place to come to.

Second order

1. Secure the efficient and compatible location of all activities in relation to each other and the various public facilities and services.
2. Improve public transport to the Central Area and provide identifiable distribution of facilities within the Central Area.
3. Achieve a balance between the amount of vehicular traffic able to come to the Central Area, and the ability of the Central Area to absorb it.
4. Provide a suitable roading network to enable the efficient vehicular servicing of activities within the Central Area.

5. Provide a suitable pedestrian network to provide safe and comfortable pedestrian access to all activities.
6. Provide an improved system for moving people within the Central Area itself.
7. Achieve an environment with acceptable standards as to freedom from danger, noise, fumes, and vibration.
8. Ensure that an adequate amount of light, ventilation, outlook and sunshine is guaranteed to buildings, and to streets and other pedestrian places.
9. Preserve buildings of historic interest and places of special character, and develop desirable aspects of the Central Area's character.
10. Encourage redevelopment.
11. Provide, as far as possible, for all new development to be designed with due consideration to its site and its visual appropriateness.

(It must be recognized that, where a policy statement covers a wide range of parameters, all policies cannot be applied universally. Also, in evaluating ways and means to achieve the above goals, due regard must be given to the benefits in relation to the costs).

GOALS