

MULTIPLE STRATEGIES IN SEARCH OF COHERENT IMPLEMENTATION

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The Auckland Region has developed an array of strategies over recent years – on urban growth, transport, economic development, sustainability, open space, business land, affordable housing, recreation, settlement, and more. The amount and extent of strategies and plans provide an indication of the many and varied issues facing the region. However, there is a growing opinion amongst some commentators, that there are too many strategies in Auckland, and that the various strategies may lack coordination and struggle to achieve what is needed for Auckland. One high profile response to this concern is the recent call for a review of governance in the region.

This article provides an overview of key strategies in the region, what they contain, and the reasons for their development. It argues that there is a need for the range of strategies that have been developed, but identifies that it is time now to focus on coherent implementation, to ensure the outcomes identified in these various strategies are achieved.

AUCKLAND'S CORE STRATEGIES

Managing growth

It was with great excitement that in November 1999 all the councils of the Auckland Region adopted the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) 2050 – a vision for managing growth in the Auckland Region. They also signed a Memorandum

of Understanding to signal their support for its implementation. The RGS seeks to manage growth by limiting sprawl and encouraging development into centres of varying sizes. It encourages mixed use, higher density centres which can be supported by enhanced passenger transport services. The RGS was developed over three years amid increasing concern that growth was out of control. The process involved significant technical analysis, wide consultation and intensive political workshops.

Keeping moving

The Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) was launched at the same time as the RGS and has since been reviewed and updated. The RLTS seeks to achieve:

- A transport system Aucklanders can be proud of, where...
People and goods are able to move when necessary
Transport supports vibrant town centres
Streets are also community places
Getting around by all modes is integrated, safe and effective
- People have choices which enable them to participate in society
The environment and human health are protected.
Subsequently ARTA was established to plan transport, and has developed a regional transport

plan to align the policy direction in the RGS with transport infrastructure and services. There is ongoing engagement between the region and central government on the funding and timing of passenger transport provision.

Growing the economy

Acknowledging the lack of an economic basis and vision behind the RGS (and its focus on residential development), a partnership process was established in December 2001 to develop a regional economic development strategy. The Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy (AREDS) was born in 2002 with the vision for the Auckland Region to be an internationally competitive, inclusive and dynamic economy, a great place to live and conduct business, a place buzzing with innovation where skilled people work in dynamic enterprises. The Auckland Economic Development Forum was set up as the "home" of AREDS in 2005 and Auckland PLUS, a business unit of the ARC, and was set up to implement key elements of AREDS including promotion of the region, a single point of contact for investors, and to facilitate regional economic development projects.

Action on economic development

Most recently the Metro Project Action Plan was launched in October 2006 to deliver

the strategy identified in AREDS. It has five objectives: Take effective and efficient action to transform Auckland's economy; deliver world-class infrastructure and world-class urban centre; transform Auckland into a world-class destination; develop a skilled and responsive labour force; and increase business innovation and export strength.

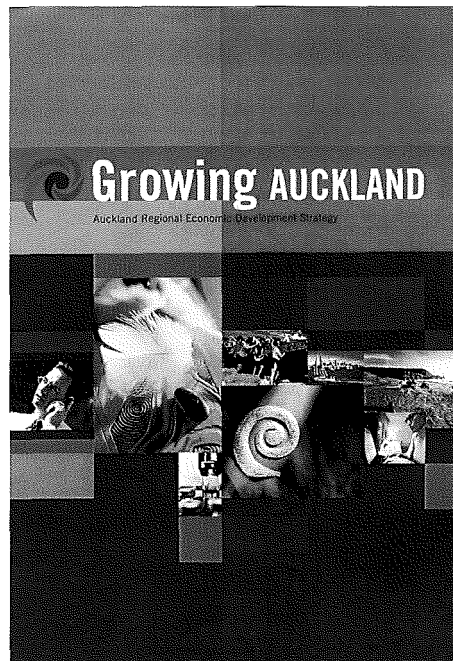
It responds to the recognition that Auckland needs to push its potential as a high performing, globally engaged city-region to the benefit of New Zealand, and supports central government's goal of increasing exports and raising living standards. The Action Plan was developed through wide consultation and benefited from the advice of an international panel of experts and high-profile symposium. The Plan reflects the desire for practical actions to make a difference to how Auckland performs on a global stage. A group of "Champions" mostly recruited from the private sector has emerged with the aim of providing support and advocacy for implementation.

Providing for business

Both the Regional Growth Forum and AREDS identified the need for a Business Land Strategy (BLS) in 2002. A Business Land Strategy has been prepared which provides a strategic framework about how Auckland local government can plan to enable future business growth in the region. Work is now underway to identify tools and methods to redevelop and intensify business activities in centres, and to identify greenfield land for the future growth of industrial business sectors.

START

Sustainability has been put more explicitly on the regional agenda with START (Sustaining the Auckland Region Together) a process to develop a long-term sustainability framework for the Auckland Region. The START project aims to deliver: a vision and high level goals to provide clear direction for achieving a long-term sustainable Auckland Region; principles to guide

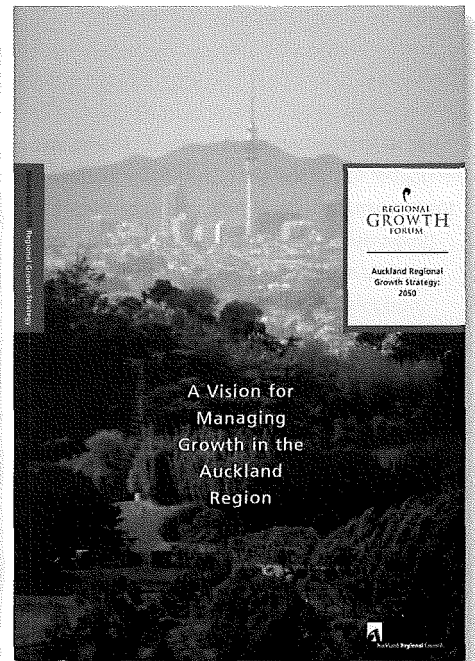


decision-making towards sustainable outcomes; key directions that identify priority action areas and strategic responses, for implementation through Councils' and central government's strategies and programmes and in partnerships with stakeholders.

Six key "forces of change" that may affect the Auckland region in the 21st century (demographics, globalisation, technology, resource use, climate change, and world views) have been examined and a wide range of possible impacts identified. START reinforces the need for holistic and long-term thinking with a focus on stewardship, inclusion and equity, leadership and innovation, adaptability, resilience and resource efficiency. Auckland councils' will consider the START report over the coming months.

TOO MANY STRATEGIES?

The strategies outlined above address urgent issues for the region and seek to define agreed ways forward. While they may seem numerous, when considered sequentially, they make more



sense. Indeed, some of the strategies have evolved out of the RGS, for instance – the open space strategy, the affordable housing strategy, and the business land strategy. These specifically seek to address issues raised within the context of the RGS. Others respond clearly to the RGS, e.g. the RLTS, whilst others were developed to fill "gaps" or move the strategies into action e.g. the Metro Action Plan.

The important question is not whether we have too many strategies, but rather how well we are implementing the desired outcomes identified in these strategies.

RGS ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS

Since 1999 when the RGS was adopted, there has been considerable change in the Auckland region. Strong growth has continued with approximately 120,000 extra people since 2001, and 81,000 new dwellings since 1996. Auckland in 2006 is a very different place to the Auckland of 1999. Significant progress has been made in a number of areas:

There has been unprecedented investment in

