

### 3.0 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

#### 3.1 DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The broad development goals and objectives for Helensville-Parakai can be summarised in a few short statements:

- (i) To provide adequately and appropriately for the economic, residential, service and other functional needs of the existing and projected future populations.
- (ii) Recognise the high natural heritage values of the area and potential natural environmental problems and plan urban development so as to limit further natural environmental impacts, and positively enhance values by addressing present problems.
- (iii) At the overall level to recognise those natural and built elements which give the area its uniqueness of character, and enhance this condition, by contained urban development and the creation of areas of distinct urban and rural character, respectively.
- (iv) At the local level maximising the inherent natural and built assets to create neighbourhoods of distinct identity and amenity.
- (v) In providing for the above, to integrate the mutual development of land use, accessibility, and required engineering services to ensure that the urban areas perform properly and optimally.
- (vi) To enhance the operation, safety and coherence of the urban road network, and provide a road network that will be flexible and adaptable to a range of likely future demands and have the capacity for staged development.
- (vii) To formulate a comprehensive plan for a spatial structure which not only addresses existing problems, and also achieves an appropriately structured future built environment and urban form.

#### 3.2 STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Strategic options with respect to the future growth of Helensville-Parakai's urban area can be reduced to three scenarios. These are:

(i) **Continuation of status quo**

This will result in:

- Increased environmental blight in the absence of an appropriate river management plan and flood control measures.
- Residential growth in several directions around both Helensville and Parakai, sometimes led by developer-chosen locations, compounding engineering servicing programmes and leading to unnecessary increased servicing costs and urban sprawl.
- Continued use of (including the possible widening of) existing State Highway 16 through the Helensville town centre, disintegrating the town, and decreasing the performance of the centre as a local shopping and civic precinct.

- Further negative impacts on Commercial Road's performance and increased congestion as vehicular-dominated land uses establish on available commercial sites.
- Alternatively, limited retail and town centre expansion possibilities in the centre as a result of traffic and parking problems, and the threat of new large retail developments locating in more remote and peripheral locations.
- Failure to capitalise on unique attributes such as the river, the geothermal resources and the heritage aspects of Helensville.
- Industrial expansion in the Mill Road industrial area, which is appropriate.
- Failure to direct the development of Helensville's mixed business areas on either side of the town centre, and thereby perpetuate an incompatible and sub-optimum land use mix and pattern, and form of development.
- Dysfunctional and disintegrated open space network and absence of a functional hierarchy of passive and active open spaces.
- Progressive aesthetic decay of the centre's built fabric because of an absence of a comprehensive urban design framework.

This approach is clearly not desirable or sustainable, and undertaking the Structure Plan, to avoid this scenario, recognises this.

(ii) **Short term "quick fix" strategy**

This approach would see ad hoc solutions applied to individual problem areas, as they have been identified. Some solutions would no doubt be generated in relation to many of the problems already identified, but in effect:

- solutions would be reactive and piecemeal and not necessarily coordinated.
- is likely to generate contradictions, thereby requiring the re-visiting of certain problem areas in the future, at an increased overall development cost.
- will not position the town to deal with future developmental pressures, as by its very nature, this type of strategy is not forward looking.

This approach is equally inappropriate in that it is counter to the strategic and comprehensive planning objectives of the Structure Plan.

(iii) **Comprehensive and integrated planning**

This strategy is recommended and adopted in that it:

- considers all elements of physical development and provides a set of mutually reinforcing solutions and developmental guidelines.
- is aimed at solving identified problems as well as opening up as many future options as possible, thereby reducing the likelihood of localised problems arising in the future.
- allows for integrated programmes and budgets to be formulated.

- is forward looking, thereby not only creating a vision for future development, but also provides a plan which will position the area to accommodate future growth pressures before they might arise.

### 3.3 DEFINED SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The spatial strategy adopted has the following primary elements, and is graphically depicted in Plan 6.

- (i) **Maintenance of the River Zone** as a hydrological and ecological corridor, (notwithstanding limited and controlled additional development on the three riverbend peninsulas which are already developed).

This determines that structurally Helensville and Parakai will remain separate townships, with Helensville retaining its dominant role, function and size.

- (ii) **The maintenance of Helensville's linear town centre** and the reinforcement of an activity distinction between areas, by allowing the development of identifiably different zones, such as a pedestrian-orientated civic and shopping area with riverside development in central Commercial Road, mixed business areas beyond the centre (in Mill Road and Railway Street), and industrial areas further back from State Highway 16.

In order to achieve this it is necessary to introduce a legible, effective and hierarchical road network into the town centre, both to cope with the conflicting demands of through traffic and local traffic and to enable a small-town Mainstreet to develop along Commercial Road.

It is thus necessary to plan and construct a limited access town centre bypass route, between the eastern entrance to Helensville and about the Showgrounds/Pipitiwai Drive area. It is noted that at this point in time, the need for further feasibility studies on the by-pass and associated roading limits detailed structure planning in areas potentially required for this new route.

It is also vital to enable the town centre to expand, by using available vacant and underdeveloped land around the corner into Mill Road and setting the pre-conditions for redevelopment of sub-optimally utilised land parcels (i.e. former Kaipara Dairy Co premises).

Easy access to the town centre from the proposed by-pass, and also from the town's existing and future residential areas needs to be established.

The town centre's activities and functioning will be enhanced and reinforced by the development of the riverfront between the Helensville Reserve and Bridge Street.

- (iii) **Concentrate conventional residential expansion** in two new residential areas, namely, Helensville South and Parakai West for the next 20 years. These residential expansion areas:

- are geotechnical stable and suitable in terms of flooding.
- can easily accommodate the projected residential demand for the next 20 years (having a capacity for about 1,500 additional conventional urban sites).
- are relatively easily serviceable, with respect to water and sewerage.
- will have set a definite long term urban edge on the north and east, but allowing for eastward and/or southward expansion in the much longer term.



- will be provided with an adequate network of internal roads.
- in the case of Helensville South, will be developed within a natural landscape envelope, affording opportunities for neighbourhood identity. In this area the proposed central reserve (principally along the drainage valley which leads into the Awaroa Stream) will reinforce this area's identity. The central reserve will include stormwater management structures, and local parks will be attached to this key open space.

It is proposed to continue the differential residential densities between Helensville and Parakai, with Parakai being developed to a slightly higher density.

Two small blocks of lower intensity residential (2,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 6,000 m<sup>2</sup> sites) are proposed, being:

- the area abutting Rogan Avenue (about 15 sites)
  - a small area within Helensville South (about 18 sites)
- (iv) **Mixed business areas** to be reinforced at the town entrances (i.e. along Mill Road and Railway Street). Whilst the existing land use pattern will remain largely unchanged in both of these areas, in the case of the Mill Road area:
- the redevelopment of the handful of residences on Mill Road and Baker Street is envisaged in the medium to long term.
  - it will be necessary to extend the present indicative service road to function as a looped service road, in order to provide adequately for access into both the mixed business area and industrial area to the south of Mill Road.
- (v) **Industrial expansion** only in Helensville, in the Mill Road area (where sufficient industrial land for the foreseeable future is zoned). The already more elevated Mill Road area could be made flood-free by a formalised landfilling programme, thereby allowing more intensive (with respect to built coverage) general industrial development.

The riverbend peninsula opposite the Showgrounds is proposed for land-extensive industries which have minimal built coverage requirements. This area is, however, identified for longer term needs, subject to future investigations on the suitability of the area for such purposes. This will have to be coordinated with the further planning of the urban area beyond the ten year period.

- (vi) **The expansion of sports facilities at Rautawhiri Park**, reinforcing its emerging role as a sub-district multi-sport complex.
- (vii) **An integrated open space network** extending broadly along the Kaipara River and Awaroa Stream, and linking to Parakai and Helensville South. This open space network will also serve to link the schools and town centre. This greater network would provide for pedestrian movement between all key elements of the urban area (i.e. linking large urban parks, smaller neighbourhood parks, schools, esplanades, and urban walkways).

Helensville South and the upper reaches of the Awaroa drainage valley would include stormwater management systems (e.g. a series of small water quality ponds) within the central reserve.

The retention of as many watercourses with greater than 3m stream width as possible, with riparian reserve margins within linear reserves and/or built development.

- (viii) **Countryside Living (Town)**, lifestyle blocks, are to be concentrated in a broad band on the eastern and southern edges of Helensville. To the south and to the north (i.e. existing Pipitiwai Drive) this will be on the elevated ridges and steeper slopes. The eastern hillsides will, however, be free of built development, with built structures of lifestyle blocks developed only in the lower areas adjacent to the Awaroa Stream.

In order to allow the fullest subdivision and development of these zones, it will be necessary to introduce public roads into their interior.

- (ix) **A small zone of Countryside Living (Rural)**, being larger lifestyle blocks, is proposed for the area immediately to the south of Parakai, between Parkhurst Road and the river.
- (x) A comprehensively-planned **multi-purpose tourist recreation resort**, based on local geothermal waters, to be developed on land allocated for this purpose to the north of Springs Road. Development of geothermal resources is constrained by extraction capacity and this is a key factor with respect to the scale of resort which could develop. It is further noted that geothermal water sources are located only close to Springs Road and that the core area of the resort is thus likely to be located between Springs Road and Green Road. This does not preclude certain more space extensive components of the resort from extending beyond Green Road (i.e. north of the Study Area boundary).

With regard to roading, the key elements of the strategy are listed below.

- (xi) **Introduce a town centre by-pass** which will be a limited access route, providing access to Helensville (from Mill Road through to Railway Street) at the south-western and northern entrances to the town.

The bypass will serve to reduce the through-traffic impact on the Commercial Road section of State Highway 16, which in turn will limit the disintegrative nature of this route through Helensville. This will facilitate the development of a more enclosed and calmer Mainstreet.

Figure 3 outlines various possible options for the town centre by-pass, noting that none of these alignments might eventually prevail.

- (xii) **Residential collector roads** serving proposed residential areas will include:
- Rautawhiri, Inland and Wishart Roads, serving the proposed Helensville South residential area.
  - A new residential collector road network within both Helensville South and Parakai West.
- (xiii) **Local streets** to be developed include:
- Local streets serving the Amberley Heights and Park View residential areas and linking to Rautawhiri and Awaroa Roads.
  - New local streets in the two proposed new residential areas.
  - A new local service road through the Mill Road (south) mixed business/industrial area. Both ends of this road would lead on to present Mill Road.
- (xiv) **The upgrading of the railway station** commensurate with the encouragement and usage pattern of rail services.

- (xv) The continued use of the **Parakai Airfield**, and importantly not foreclosing on functional air traffic requirements in the development of a multi-purpose recreation resort.