



DRAFT FEEDBACK

On: The Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) Interim Report

By: SmartGrowth Social Sector Forum

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The purpose of the Social Sector Forum (SSF) is to provide a view that reflects the interests of the community and social sector, enabling direct participation in Strategy implementation and monitoring across the Western Bay of Plenty.

Key Statement

The Forum is seeking transformative structural change.

Members of the Social Sector Forum urge attention to urban planning that will enable social justice, social cohesion and prosperity for all, as the heart of the matter, because people matter.

It is the Forum's view that the growth capacity scenario options need to be assessed for their impact on the "four well-beings," through the impact measures of Treasury's Living Standards Framework. These domains will crucially enable and optimise sustainable and equitable human centred responses to climate change, population-ageing and technological development.

Key Concerns

1. Liveable Communities

UFTI is focused on supporting "*liveable community outcomes – finding answers for housing capacity, intensification, multi-modal transport and network capacity*".

As a spatial planning document, the Forum found it difficult to ascertain, from the scenarios presented in the UFTI Interim Report, how liveability and social equity will be achieved. This is a very vexing and highly pertinent issue, given that liveability has not been achieved through the SmartGrowth plans to date. Current urban planning outcomes have exacerbated housing poverty and social distress significantly affecting community wellbeing.

Social equity implies fair access to livelihood, education and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs. The demographics of increasing longevity, Maori and migrant communities indicates a need for considered social and culturally aligned planning to achieve an urban ecosystem that is inclusive, fair and just.

Liveable communities are those where members can access services without using cars, where local work and services are available and accessible, green ecologies and safe sufficient meeting places are prioritised. They are designed with communities themselves using proactive social planning principles. This is the starting point for conceptualising and designing urban form.

Issue: Why has the SmartGrowth Strategy failed to deliver liveable communities despite the understood and stated urban planning values?

The Forum seeks a clear explanation of solutions to ensure no further exacerbation of social inequality through housing and transport poverty. How will this be mitigated in the next UFTI/SmartGrowth plan? The Forum seeks a clear explanation on how quality neighbourhood greenspace, that meets the goals of restoring biodiversity and being great people places, as well as access to social infrastructure and community amenity will be achieved in highly intensified communities.

2. Housing

The UFTI Interim Report does not sufficiently take account of known and projected housing needs (affordable, typologies, community based elder care, etc) place-making and the role of transport accessibility in creating liveable communities according to future population profile needs.

The report should clearly identify what needs to change in order to meet known and projected housing poverty. There are too many assumptions made in regard to quality intensification and green field development that rely on market forces. The demand and supply mechanisms for social housing need to be identified.

Issue: How, when and who will meet the SmartGrowth/ City social housing crisis now and what mechanisms will UFTI deliver to avoid further exacerbation of housing poverty? The Forum urgently seeks defined new partnership arrangements for change to produce improved housing outcomes for urgent current and projected future needs.

3 Transport

The UFTI Interim Report is largely focussed on rapid transit corridors, with “empty” assumptions on modalities within the urban form. However, the Forum seeks a strengthening of the complimentary transport modalities, shared travel and innovation options that enable people to move within their community localities. The UFTI viewshaft assumes continued CBD commuter workforce demand when trends show increased service industry workforce growth to meet changing demographics and access to community-based needs e.g. health care and home based work/life balance and delivery service demand.

Increasing the capacity of community modalities will meet accessibility needs while reducing congestion and carbon emissions.

Issue: Why has community transport connectivity been overlooked? The Forum seeks more advanced planning for the delivery of urban centre community connectivity.

Feedback

1. The scenarios should be built around, and evaluated against the following criteria:
 - **Planning for people** is conducted with reference to sustainability of the land and uses a co-creation process with Maori
 - **Planning for people** is conducted from an active perspective for shared prosperity across the four well-beings
 - **Planning for people** is based on the demographic transformation occurring now – longevity, population-ageing including Maori and Asian increased birthrates.
 - Incorporates the (potential) use of Maori land
 - How the scenarios can efficiently create liveable communities
 - Economic trends: Maori population changes, minority communities, longevity and population-aging, material deprivation/poverty, changing nature of work
 - Focus on “first and last kilometre solutions”
 - Emergent smart technologies
 - Extent of green ecologies, changes in food production/growing practices and versatile soils
 - Climate change goals
 - Social impact assessment of access to urban service centres
2. Of the four scenarios outlined in the report, we consider the best one to be whichever scenario provides the most **affordable** transport, housing options, liveable communities and prioritises green spaces. Of the two, Connected Urban Villages would seem to provide better liveable communities and is an extension of how communities are currently evolving.
3. In relation to connectivity via public transport, consideration should be given to the use of smaller buses or shuttles within communities. This is a social equity, economic and accessibility issue particularly pertinent for older people, people with prams, those with children and those with mobility issues. These are also the sorts of people whose daily routine is not tied to a conventional workplace; they need access to vehicles that will help them to make many small, short trips in the course of a single excursion.
4. Dispersed Growth (Base) scenario should not be considered as a viable option and it is noted that it had the highest score of unsustainability.
5. We would like to see more on how the options will deliver against measured social indicators including defined levels of affordable housing and state housing. The Social Sector Forum’s discussion on what these levels should be were necessarily tentative, but suggested realistic starting points of one in three houses being “affordable” and one in ten being state-provided.

Summary

The Forum found making a response difficult for the following reasons:

1. The report perspective was not people-based.
2. The workshops were conducted in a 2040 futures position. However members are engaged in a critically demanding social support environment of unmet need today.
3. Clear short, medium and long term timeframes and critical priority actions were not evident.

For these reasons it was not possible to endorse any of the programmes outlined in the report.