



Future Proof Submission on  
The Auckland Council's  
*Draft Future Urban Land Supply Strategy*

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**Submission:**

This is a submission by the Future Proof Implementation Committee on the Auckland Council's Draft Future Urban Land Supply Strategy. The content of the submission follows overleaf. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the document.

**Signed:**

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Bill Wasley  
Future Proof Independent Chair

## 1 Introduction

This submission is presented on behalf of the Future Proof Implementation Committee (“FPIC”), the governance group responsible for implementation of the Future Proof Growth Strategy. The FPIC includes representatives from the Future Proof sub-regional councils of the Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council, Waipa and Waikato Districts as well as Tāngata Whenua and the New Zealand Transport Authority.

The Future Proof Growth Strategy is a 50-year growth management and implementation plan for the Future Proof sub-region. The sub-region refers to the administrative areas of the territorial authorities of Hamilton City Council, Waipa District Council, and Waikato District. Future Proof is currently in the implementation phase and the Strategy has been embedded in relevant statutory documents. The Strategy has been successful in providing a strategic, integrated approach to long-term planning and growth management in the sub-region.

In the past Future Proof has submitted on the Auckland Plan and the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan. Our key points in all of those submissions relate to cross-boundary issues, the need for better land use and transport integration and the importance of the Waikato and Auckland working in a collaborative manner. In those submissions we outlined background to the Future Proof Strategy. We do not propose to repeat that material in this submission.

Submissions on the Draft Future Urban Land Supply Strategy (“Land Supply Strategy”) are also being made by individual Future Proof Partners which cover more specific issues relating to their territorial areas or functions. This submission by Future Proof is intended to provide a high level response in terms of cross boundary issues, integrated planning, transport and other infrastructure, as well as highlighting the importance of working collaboratively.

We would like to commend the Auckland Council on the development of the Land Supply Strategy. This type of work is an important part of integrated planning and provides very useful information in terms of land supply, staging and infrastructure provision. For areas in the Waikato which are close to the boundary with Auckland, this is important material.

Future Proof is seeking the following key additions to the Land Release Strategy:

- A reference to the potential cross-boundary effects between Auckland and the Waikato in Appendix 1, under ‘The South’ growth area.
- A reference to the need to work collaboratively between Auckland and the Waikato on the Southern growth area, particularly in terms of infrastructure, especially transport.
- The need for joint transport modelling to assess the impacts on State Highway 1 and the Waikato Expressway.

## 2 The Waikato and Auckland

### Complementary Land Use Patterns

The strategic approach underpinning the Future Proof Strategy is a blend of compact settlement and concentrated growth. The Strategy supports a fundamental shift in growth management from

focusing largely on accommodating low-density suburban residential development to supporting a more compact urban form. This is a similar approach to the Auckland Council as outlined in the Auckland Plan and which is now being implemented through the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan and the Land Supply Strategy. Having alignment in this strategic approach of achieving a more compact urban form is important for future planning between the two regions.

Having an anchored land use or settlement pattern within the Future Proof sub-region and within its neighbouring regions, especially Auckland is important as it allows the costs of growth to be identified early which can deliver a more cost-effective form of infrastructure. It also provides land use certainty to the community, developers, local government and central government.

### **The Inter-Relationship between Auckland and the Waikato**

The Future Proof Strategy identifies the following key influences from Auckland<sup>1</sup> :

- Influence of the Auckland Urban Limits (now the RUB) – this can have the effect of displacing growth into the Future Proof sub-region.
- Auckland has a large amount of growth occurring to the south, both in population and in business/industry. The Future Proof sub-region has business land growth to the north. This is reducing the distance between the business areas of Auckland and the Future Proof sub-region.
- There are strong activity and transport links between Auckland and the Future Proof sub-region. Freight movements between the Waikato and Auckland are expected to double by 2031.
- Travel times between Auckland and Hamilton are shorter and the completion of the Waikato Expressway will facilitate this.
- The Future Proof sub-region and the wider Waikato is essentially the only significant rural hinterland for the Auckland region.
- Ports of Auckland is a significant destination point for freight and goods from the sub-region.
- The growth and economic triangle of Auckland, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty

The approach of the Future Proof Strategy is to take account of the whole corridor between Auckland and the Future Proof sub-region. This is important from a land-use and transport integration perspective as the two areas are very closely related.

### **Future Proof Work relevant to the Southern Area of Auckland**

Future Proof has undertaken some work on the Hamilton to Auckland corridor and has identified the following high-level outcomes:

- The need for a complementary land use pattern between Auckland and the Waikato.
- Protecting productive rural land in the northern Waikato given its role as a food basket for the Upper North Island.
- The role of an expanded Pukekohe in relation to other nearby settlements in the Waikato District, namely Tuakau and Pokeno.

The Future Proof Implementation Committee at its meeting of 9 March 2015 has also agreed in principle to an update of the Future Proof Strategy. The update is currently underway and has a

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<sup>1</sup> Future Proof Growth Strategy & Implementation Plan 2009, page 39

particular focus on northern Waikato issues. The Strategy Update will look closely at evaluating the following three future land use options / scenarios:

- (a) Business as Usual including an analysis of what may happen if there are no further interventions other than those already in place.
- (b) A potentially market-led scenario which would likely see a long corridor of development between Auckland and Hamilton.
- (c) A settlement pattern which has a strong focus on Auckland at one end and Hamilton City at the other – with a view to consolidating development around these two centres.

The Future Proof Strategy Update will incorporate the areas of Pokeno and Tuakau and will likely recommend urban limits for these two areas. The market is very active in the northern Waikato and we need to manage it in a proactive manner.

The Waikato District Council has also recently developed a Draft District Development Strategy. This Strategy considers cross boundary issues and opportunities in the northern Waikato. The Draft Strategy incorporates two key maps which illustrate the inter-related nature of the northern Waikato with Auckland. These are attached to this submission as **Appendix 1**. Given that demand is outstripping supply in Pokeno, Future Proof is of the view that the population figures for Pokeno are likely to be higher than those indicated on the first map.

The development uptake and buyer information out of Pokeno indicates that there are spill-over effects occurring from Auckland into the Waikato. This information also demonstrates the inter-related nature of the Auckland-Waikato property market.

The Future Proof partners have been engaged in an Investment Logic Mapping exercise in conjunction with the New Zealand Transport Agency for the Northern Waikato. This exercise has helped us to identify key issues in the northern Waikato, to map out what objectives we are trying to achieve and to find solutions to the issues. While this exercise is still a work-in-progress, we have identified the following three key 'problems' for the northern Waikato:

- (a) Problem one: Demand for quality, communal water resources projected to increase as people and industry move to the Region; the ability to provide access to meet that demand is unlikely to remain sustainable.
- (b) Problem two: The growing population and increasing number of business in the North Waikato means that existing services, infrastructure and amenity will not meet demand.
- (c) Problem three: Changing land use in the North Waikato risks putting high quality land to non-agricultural use, which could affect adversely the contribution agriculture makes to the economy.

### **3 Sequencing of the Future Urban Areas**

Future Proof supports the approach to sequencing in the Land Supply Strategy. It is helpful to the Future Proof partners to be able to see when certain areas are timed for development and what the dwelling capacities are. Our interest is in the southern areas, particularly Karaka, Opaheke-Drury and Pukekohe-Paerata as these areas are either close with the boundary or have an impact on the transport corridor between Auckland the Waikato.

Future Proof would like to better understand the Special Housing Areas (“SHAs”) which are being implemented in the south. It is difficult to see the locations of the SHAs in the map on page 16 and it would be helpful if these could be more visible.

## 4 Cost and Scale

The identification of the bulk infrastructure requirements and an estimate of cost in section 3 is very helpful. We note that transport is by far the largest cost. For this reason it is imperative that we better understand the impact of the Land Supply Strategy on the existing network, future network requirements and what this means from an inter-regional perspective.

Within the Waikato region a significant amount of work has gone into planning for, and implementation of, the Waikato Expressway, including understanding the implications of land use on the transport network. The Waikato Expressway is one of the Government’s Roads of National Significance. The Waikato Expressway project will improve safety and reliability and reduce travel times and congestion on State Highway 1 by delivering a four-lane highway from the Bombay Hills to south of Cambridge. The Expressway will improve economic growth and productivity for Auckland, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty through more efficient movement of people and freight. Therefore, Future Proof considers that the maintenance of State highway 1 and Waikato Expressway efficiency is in the best economic and social interests for the Auckland and Waikato regions.

Once complete, the Expressway will extend 102km from the intersection of State Highway 1 and 2 at the base of the Bombay Hills, to just south of Cambridge. The Expressway will reduce the length of State Highway 1 by 6km and is expected to cut travel times between Auckland and Tirau by up to 35 minutes. The completion of the Expressway will bring Auckland and the Waikato closer together. The project is significant from an inter-regional transport and freight perspective as well as having potential land use implications by reducing the distance between Auckland and areas in the Waikato, especially Hamilton City.

Any impacts that growth may have on the safety and efficiency of this network need to be carefully considered. We need to ensure that traffic can travel efficiently through the Waikato and then into Auckland via State Highway 1. The impacts of growth on the Highway network to the south of Auckland are not yet well understood.

Future Proof therefore considers it necessary for the Auckland Council and the Waikato Regional Council to jointly model the inter-regional transport and land use effects of the Land Supply Strategy and the growth and settlement pattern proposed for the Northern Waikato (especially Pokeno and Tuakau).

This joint modelling exercise is critical because the outcomes can then be used to inform more detailed decisions as to the location and timing of future developments within the regions. This is needed in the short term so that we are not in a situation where we find out too late that “the big picture has already been smudged” by incremental, ad hoc and poorly serviced development.

## 5 Monitoring and Review

Future Proof is interested in working with the Auckland Council on monitoring and review for the areas to the south, in particular Pukekohe. Through the Future Proof Strategy Update we will also be

in a position to share monitoring information with the Auckland Council in terms of growth rates in Pokeno and Tuakau, land uptake, overspill effects, infrastructure and other relevant matters.

## 6 Appendix 1 – A Brief Overview of the Areas Considered

### The South

There is significant growth planned to the south of Auckland. The Waikato is also experiencing growth pressures in its northern towns of Tuakau and Pokeno. In Pokeno, the demand for properties within the Structure Plan Area is outstripping supply. The existing development is at least several years ahead of the predicted level. The Rural-Urban Boundary (“RUB”) line for Auckland is only 6km from Pokeno.

While Future Proof is supportive of the Land Supply Strategy and in particular the information around sequencing and infrastructure, we are still concerned that there is a ‘no-man’s’ land south of Pukekohe and into the northern Waikato.

There are widespread concerns about the cross-boundary issues between Auckland and the Waikato, including from the Waikato Regional Transport Committee, the New Zealand Transport Agency, relevant Local Government New Zealand Zones and the Upper North Island Strategic Alliance. The councils of the Waikato Region are currently working on a Waikato Spatial Plan (‘The Waikato Plan’) which will provide an overarching Waikato approach to a number of these issues.

Both Auckland and the Waikato are in a strategic thinking phase regarding the land to the south of Auckland and to the north of the Waikato as well as the cross boundary issues between the two regions. It may be up to five years before we can implement a strategic approach for the area and the associated cross-boundary issues. In the meantime we need to ensure that the collaborative efforts between Auckland and the Waikato continue.

We would like to see reference to the inter-related nature of the southern parts of Auckland and the northern parts of the Waikato and the potential cross-boundary impacts. This is important so that growth areas are not developed in isolation of the wider picture.

In its submission on the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan, Future Proof has asked that neighbouring local authorities (in this case the Waikato Regional Council and the Waikato District Council) be added as key stakeholders in any structure planning work that may have cross-boundary impacts. Future Proof is also interested in whether any ‘meso’ level planning may occur for the southern growth area (eg a type of area development plan which is not as detailed as a structure plan but encompasses a wider area). We are of the view that this type of planning would be beneficial for both regions and we would be interested in working with the Auckland Council on this.

Future Proof, the Waikato Regional Council, the Waikato District Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency are also endeavouring to share their work with the Auckland Council and to involve Auckland in its development planning exercises, this includes structure planning at Pokeno and Tuakau, the Waikato District Development Strategy and the Future Proof Strategy Update.

Future Proof is particularly interested in the transport infrastructure aspects of the Southern growth area. We support the future electrification of Pukekohe as Future Proof sees rail as playing an important role in linking areas like Pokeno and Tuakau with Pukekohe and Auckland.

In summary, Future Proof is seeking the following additions to Appendix 1 of the Land Supply Strategy under 'The South' growth area:

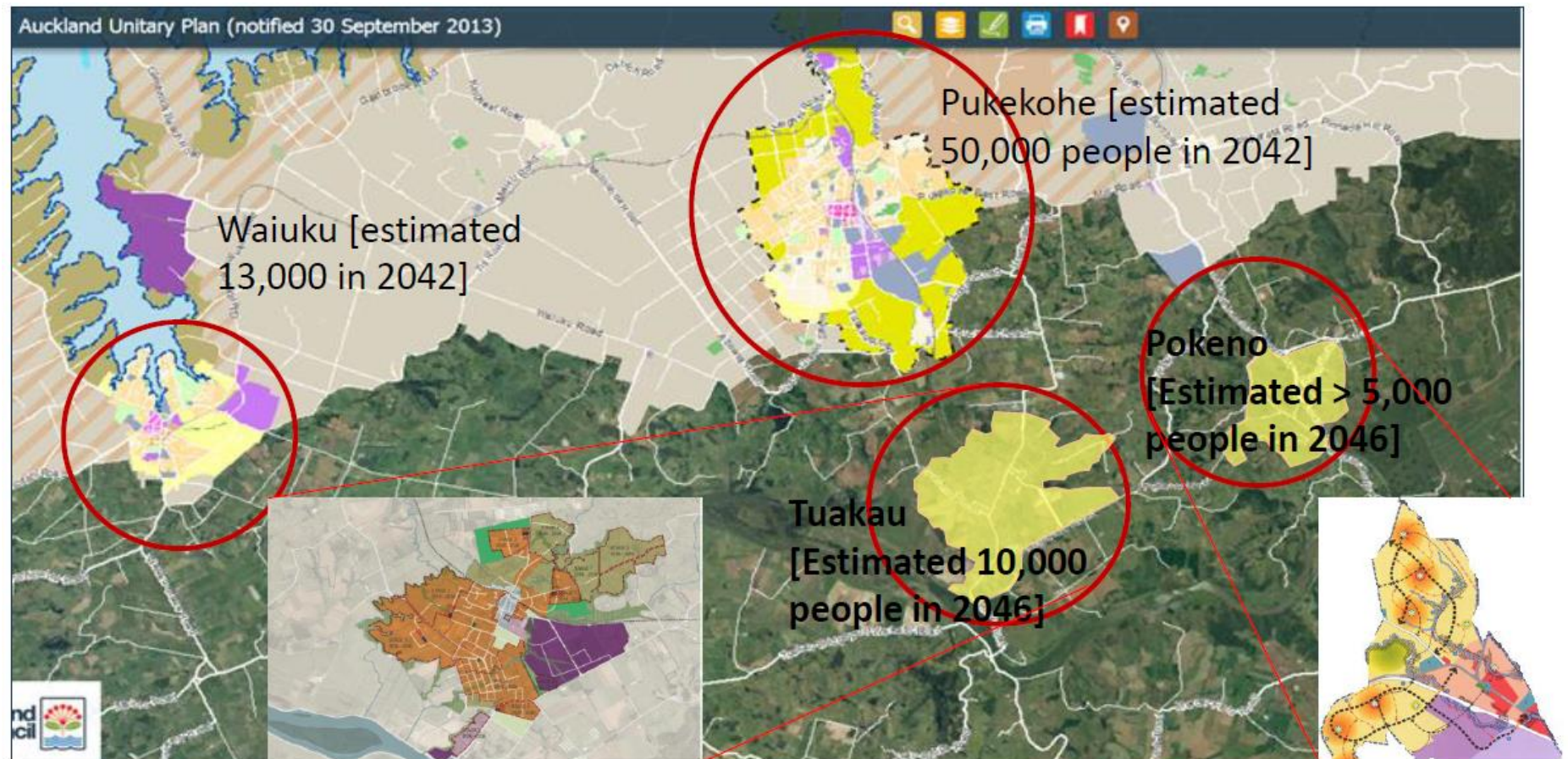
- A reference to the potential cross-boundary effects between Auckland and the Waikato.
- A reference to the need to work collaboratively between Auckland and the Waikato on the Southern growth area, particularly in terms of infrastructure, transport and any structure planning exercises.

## **7 Appendix 2 – The Principles**

Future Proof supports the four key principles outlined in Appendix 2. These provide a good balance in terms of taking a wider four well-beings approach to sequencing decisions.



## Appendix 1: North Waikato and its Relationship with Auckland<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Waikato District Council, *Waikato District Development Strategy – Draft Strategy*, November 2014 at pages 26-27

