

Council

**Wednesday, 26 June 2002
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

PART A

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, 6 WAIPAREIRA AVENUE, LINCOLN,
WAITAKERE CITY, ON WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2002,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART A - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

WHY AM I GOING TO JOHANNESBURG?

Ten years ago we had a choice. A choice about what kind of city we would allow Waitakere to become. This year we are reminded of where we have come, what we have achieved, and where we could have been.

But there was a clear path that determined how we got to that choice. Campaigning with a small team in the election of 1992, it became the catch call that this city did not have enough industrial areas. We were envious of Rosebank Road, Penrose and Manukau City. Because rates were high and were seen to be unfair, the agenda was driven in the wrong direction. What was lost was how it might just be better. The City if anything revolved around motorways and the wrong kind of signals: a vision for the city's potential was not there.

The eco-city rose out of the need of a good idea to propel a new city forward. The term "sustainability" would come later. Even "environment" was a word still new in this wild west of the past. Once we were committed after being elected to an eco-city, the bare bones of the slogan and agenda needed to be filled and flourished. It brought with it its own energy and with it a great sheaf of ideas. The eco-city, if it had a rocky start, grew up very quickly, it becomes its own force field, and it multiplied with its ideas and style.

In politics, everything is personal, and one has to take personal responsibility for decisions right or wrong. I have never questioned the environmental truth of standing up for a clean green agenda. With smart thinking from extraordinary elected members, I have been blessed in this Council over the last ten years with working with the very best of local government. Sure there have been difficult times and difficult people. But the truth is the vision has never been seriously damaged nor has the strength or delivery of the eco city concept. At the blessing last week for the Te Atatu park I was able to acknowledge that only in Waitakere would they opt for a magnificent green space with dazzling sculpture to enhance the Te Atatu shopping centre. In any other area, it would be earmarked for a new Warehouse, Mitre 10, or town house complex. Here in Waitakere we think outside the square, for the generations yet to come.

The eco-city came into its own in the water crisis. It gave us status and standing, and it gave me as Mayor a certain credibility, and all residents in Waitakere City - unlike the rest of the Auckland metropolis - can hold up their glass from the tap and say, simply; *rainwater*. On a sports programme last week the America's Cup Team Leader said that they had just made a presentation at a breakfast meeting in Waitakere city led by a Mayor that was both visionary and needed no introduction. I guess you have got to be careful with the ego in all of this, but it is nice to know that you wear a leadership role for not only your city but proudly for your Councillors. If I could consider the important ingredient in the last ten years, it is consistency. Throughout the last ten years, we have made choices; here's what we could have done:

- Not called Waitakere the eco-city.
- Not re-started the Youth Council.
- Waged war on community boards.
- Not formed Te Taumata Runanga.
- Not formed the Pacific Island Advisory Board.
- Opened the gate for the bulldozers to roll over the Waitakere Ranges.
- Allowed Glen Eden and all other town centres not on arterial roads to simply die.
- Buried the small streams in pipes rather than plant trees around them.
- Told community networks to get stuffed and look after themselves.



- Avoided the Mayoral Forum and the national political “loop”.
- Accepted the mediocrity of just providing roads, rates and rubbish.
- Waited for tertiary education to arrive.
- Left town planning to the malls.
- Left Hobsonville to the real estate sharks.
- Allowed everyone to call us westie dope smoking white trash hoons.
- Let public opinion be led by letters from the disaffected and maligned.
- Assumed Trash To Fashion, Trees for Babies, and the Going West Literary Festival not to be core Council business.
- Felt ashamed after making mistakes instead of getting on with it.

Why? Why choose to do the other thing? Because we opted for the hard way. The easy way is not making decisions. Making clear, concise decisions are fraught with political danger. Part of being a good Council is being tough with the long-term decisions. You get fired for changing your mind. You get re-elected for having an idea, and sticking with it.

One of the results of going the easy way would have been something like this. Imagine the force field around a high-tension power line crackling with energy and ready to flash over and discharge 20,000 volts at any point along its length. It stretches for two hundred kilometres in each direction, over towns and villages and across vast tracts of what appears to be open country. Without warning, a flash of energy short-circuits the field, and precipitates a shopping centre so big that it needs 200,000 people within reach to make it pay. As the dust settles, there is another charge of energy, and an office park erupts out of nothing, tower blocks tens of stories high rising out of what had previously been farmland. It is completely repellent to human life other than in cars. Somewhere in a remote corner, there remain small enclaves of pedestrian streets, fringes of terraced houses that circle the stand of office towers that marks downtown.

The energy that powers the force field is of course mobility: constantly changing homes, constantly getting in and out of cars, spending the vast majority of one's entire life inside a car, inside the home, or inside the office.

We chose a different way. In *this* Waitakere City there are two parallel strands; one is the electric force field, the other a river. They rarely touch or pass over each other. The force field is about speed and the energy of speed - of data, cars, trucks, and electricity. It is incredibly noisy, powerful, muscular, polluted, and violent in its presence on the land and in its capacity for generating stress, crime and damage. Malls and industrial areas continue to form around it.

On the other side is a river; it is slower, less noisy, filled with people, complicated by rock pools of town centres teeming with the life of civic centres such as community centres, high schools and primary schools, courts, police stations, libraries, houses, shops, as well as malls and some industrial areas. Life here is complex, still stressful of course, but less violent, less noisy, encouraging a large biosphere around it both human and other. It is a place for people. This was the kind of city that we hoped would be creative, energised, but people friendly.

Ten years ago, Waitakere City could easily have chosen the first way. It would have been a reality in which we were addicted to the motorway, where our town centres along the old routes died as they were starved of feeder traffic and the green fields of the north-west burned with housing all the way to Helensville, where our neighbourhoods were periodically carved in two by further motorways or regional roads. It would have been an unruly, strange City resembling the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles.

Ten years ago, we decided that the north-western motorway would be a part of getting around, but that the heart and soul of our lives would be in the town centres, keeping the biosphere strong, encouraging life to be more than home-motorway-work-motorway-home. Ten years ago we decided upon the eco-city as a direction we would set Waitakere City on for the foreseeable future. I have a strong sense that Waitakere City is living in the future, now.



The city of the future is not to be found in the United States or Europe. Instead we must look to the Pacific - in particular the western and southern edges of it. One model is exemplified in the city of Shenzhen. A former fishing village, Shenzhen was a small town with a population of just 30,000 in the mid-1980s. But the Chinese government, desperate to create an industrial powerhouse to encourage growth, has since thrown money into building new homes and factories in the once-sleepy town. Shenzhen is now home to four million people. Inside that city, income gaps are widening rapidly, unemployment is growing, and air and water quality are a real problem. This is the model of untrammelled growth, which expects a ten-fold increase in population by 2010.

What is striking is the degree of growth over such a short period of time. Consider for example, the range upon range of hills in Waitakere City now covered with houses, and consider this comment from CF Gardiner in Dick Scott's book *Fire on the Clay*, looking back on his arrival in the New Lynn district:

"New Lynn was a wilderness of scrub and gorse and blackberries, motley scrub. The few houses were widely spread and little in the way of farming had been attempted; west of the Whau bridge was a close approach to no-man's land, New Lynn in the first year of the [20th] century was grim, unpainted, untidy and for much the greater part uncultivated here was virgin country needing development."

That observation is only 50 years old, and we are now a city of almost 200,000 residents: we are not Shenzhen, but we are the South Pacific equivalent. Waitakere City and the Auckland region is very much a Pacific, late-colonial city in this sense of the speed of growth and all its attendant problems. As Winston Peters gleefully pointed out recently, one in five Aucklanders were not born in New Zealand. We are growing fast, and cities must accept this, and plan to do a lot more for its citizens than just cope.

Another model for a way the Auckland region could have gone is that of Los Angeles, to which the Auckland region has often been compared. This is a city obsessed with the politics of real estate, in which factions of residents have continuously banded together to defend environmental protections in the hills of Bel Air and Hollywood, and in which those on the flats form their own units defending against other exterior encroachments, particularly multi-level housing projects. The consequence of each house having its own plot is that the City has spread massively, generating a city whose freeways with their multi-level intersections and spiralling clover leaves were once the very image of the modern world. But their attractions quickly faded in the face of deteriorating concrete, gridlocks and the smog that appeared as early as the 1940s.

There are still some elements about the Auckland region that grow with this kind of fervour - the effects of the Regional Growth Strategy are proving slow to see in reality. Waitakere City evolved in the post World War II period as a classic edge city - suburban, low density, car dependent, fast growing, amorphous. It grew rapidly in the 1960s and 1980s, accommodating rural-urban migrants in housing subsidised by the state. Under priced roading and other infrastructural services (water, sewerage) enabled this suburban, low-density growth to occur.

The Council's own programme has focussed on investing in and securing change in three interlinked areas:

1. Urban and Economic:
 - Creating urban villages.
 - Catalysing public transport.
 - Economic growth, more local jobs.



2. Environmental:

- Green network extension (including storm water management).
- Waste reduction.
- Sustainable water / wastewater management.

3. Well-being:

- Key well-being issues (health, housing, education) addressed.

The Council elected in 1992 committed to reshaping Waitakere in several significant ways: to halt threats to the Waitakere Ranges and to restore the ecological foundations, including in the urban areas; to promote local economic development; to reduce the commuter flows and provide jobs particularly for young Maori and Pacific Islanders; and to make communities safer, stronger and more self reliant. The goal - to become "Waitakere - eco city"; and the strategies, principles, approach and programmes of local Agenda 21 programmes were formally adopted by Council in March 1993.

Waitakere's approach comprised two core strategies.

First, natural capital (the environment) would be sustained and restored by making "the city" more compact. This consisted of promoting urban villages by encouraging and providing for significant growth in densities and mixed activity use in areas adjacent to key transport nodes and routes.

Second, partnerships with community, business, agency, Maori and other groups were (and are) critical to securing the change in investment patterns, to changing the nature of town centres, providing for public transport, (still under 10% of the rides taken), generating local employment, decreasing environmental impacts, improving community participation, security and access to health and educational services. Waitakere's approach was to maximise engagement with stakeholders across key issues to both the community and the Council.

The future of the most precious part of our environment - our native forest - will lie in gaining statutory protection for the Waitakere Ranges. The purpose and nature of statutorily protected land has changed hugely in the past decades. When our national parks were established in the 19th century, they were areas that people did not want to live in - the remote upland and mountain areas. Maori and pakeha settled the coast and lowlands. Waitakere City's Waitakere Ranges presents a new reason for protecting these areas. Protected landscapes are essentially based on voluntary agreements with landowners. Landowners are incentivised to become conservation managers while still carrying on with traditional land uses to the extent that they are compatible with the overall vision for the area. They will require administrative arrangements, not least because intensive and specialist visitor management is normally required. At base, you should move into a forested area knowing you can not subdivide at all. We should develop a protected landscapes model for New Zealand, starting right here. It would create a virtual reserve, with land continuing in private ownership but being subject to special administrative arrangements, which will ensure better protection of biodiversity and landscape. I believe that this will be a key project for the end of this Council term.

It is this sense of being prepared to be ambitious about the role of the City in the management of the entire eco-system that makes us so visible and recognised in central government. What has been quite outstanding in recent years is the degree to which we are seeing standard eco-city policy, now being adopted as policy by government and into statute. Frankly, the waste management strategy has Waitakere City written all over it, as does the central government transport direction, the Auckland regional growth strategy, and large parts of the scheduled Local Government Bill (in its present form).



We have also had a significant impact internationally, where Waitakere now stands as an example on best practise in triple bottom line sustainability and in implementing Agenda 21- alongside such cities as Portland, Oregon. While I am away I will be forging links with the City of Galway, where I will be able to showcase Waitakere's expertise in natural resource management within a fast-growing metropolitan environment. Few cities in the world have done this as well as we do. In the sense of being a "world player", it is in resource management that New Zealand and Waitakere City in particular stands tall. The clarity of our message I am sure will allow us to continue to "punch above our weight" in our dialogue with the representatives of far larger cities at the Earth Summit.

So I will be in full cry in Johannesburg to present the New Zealand Waitakere position, and it is worth reminding us briefly why the example of smart city management is so important at the Earth Summit and beyond.

The rate at which urban zones are growing is extraordinary. Each year, between 1985 and 1995, the world's urban population grew by 73 million people. In China it grew by 226 million people over the decade. It took over eight millennia for half the world's population to become urban. Present predictions suggest that it will take less than eighty more years to encompass pretty much everyone else on the planet.

It is in this sense that Waitakere offers a powerful model not only for Auckland, or for New Zealand, or for Australasia. We offer a very clear alternative for the world's cities. There are of course other cities in the world that have followed a similar pattern. But what we offer is the ability to be smart about it - to make use of the historical accidents or patterns that have built up over time, and to make them work. For Waitakere, our historical accidents are that we have our town centres built up around rail lines, that we have a massive forest to one side, and that we are surrounded by harbours. We have made the best of the native forest, we are finally providing solutions for town centre development around rail lines, and - thanks largely to the America's Cup - we are only now beginning to turn to the vast harbours as a powerful part of the region's culture and lifestyle. We are beginning to see the reasons that we have followed this path so clearly. It is a great story to tell the world.

So I will be in full cry to present the New Zealand and Waitakere model to the world. In August I will lead the Local Government New Zealand delegation to this second United Nations Earth Summit, and while I will be representing the best practise of the whole of New Zealand's local government, I can assure you that it will have the Waitakere Way written all over it. I will also be playing a large part in chairing the outcomes of key committees, as I did in Vancouver earlier this year, and in Honolulu late last year.

Waitakere City, this is your year. Your year to stand tall on the achievements you have made in the region and in New Zealand. Your year to stand tall in the world.

MILESTONES

RETIRING UNDEFEATED

Mayor Kinoshita, after twelve years serving as Mayor of Kakogawa, will not seek re-election. Waitakere City's sister city relationship with Kakogawa extends back for over a decade now, and we share many of the same Agenda 21 principles. Mayor Kinoshita has regularly sent delegations of parks management teams from his city to see how we do it here, and it has made a real difference to the whole look and feel of Kakogawa.

He has been an inspiring leader to his citizens, and will be sadly missed.



BLESSED Jack Pringle Park

Finding a flat green space in the middle of a town centre these days is bound to get Mitre 10, the Warehouse or Briscoes eagerly measuring how big a box they can fit there. It is a tribute to Waitakere City's planning that this space is going to be a truly green heart in the middle of the town, complete with many different artworks.

The entry portal and pavilion were designed by artist John Lyall to represent the components found in the old original farm houses of the Peninsula - pick fences, iron roofs, lace work in the verandas, wagon wheels, stained glass window patterns, natural timbers - both these items were funded by Waitakere Properties Limited as their commitment to enhancing the town centre. The mosaics and ground maze and turtle in the children's playground were designed by Te Atatu Peninsula artist Harriet Stockman, and the maze represents the waves from the harbour with mosaics of the fishes and water life. Harriet has worked beyond the call of duty for her very local area - this was funded by the local Woolworths Supermarket.

SHOOTING Johnny Lingo

Producer Tim Coddington's new feature *Johnny Lingo* has been announced as being filmed in Waitakere City, and promises to be the start of many fables aimed at both the children's and adult market at the same time, in the manner of *Shrek*. The New Zealand connections formed through *Shrek* are part of the new network for both producers and distributors between New Zealand and the United States.

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS

The astonishing \$30,000 cheque raised by the Asian community's Cantonese Opera Society to the Waitakere Hospital - which was used for greatly needed resuscitation equipment and six new monitoring facilities for the new-born. Community Board Member Peter Chan and Audrey Chan both did a wonderful job bringing this together, including the fabulous opera show.

ANNOUNCED

Prime Minister Helen Clark has agreed to become patron of the Colin McCahon House Trust.

MISSED Reg White of Commercial Coachlines

Reg worked for Commercial Coachlines as a bus driver since 1969 serving the people of Laingholm and he will be greatly missed as a total character and lovable legend. Reg passed away in mid-May but certainly deserves a special mention at this time for the dedicated service he gave to so many along the Laingholm routes. Rest in peace Reg.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report of the Mayor be received.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE CITY

