

Council

**Wednesday, 28 May 2008
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT
WAITAKERE CENTRAL, 6 HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD, HENDERSON,
WAITAKERE, ON WEDNESDAY, 28 MAY 2008,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council resolve to:

1. **Receive** the Mayor's Report for May 2008.
2. **Agree** that Waitakere City Council sign a Memorandum of Understanding with our sister city Ningbo to enable business partnerships to be actively encouraged and take place in both cities.
3. **Agree** that Council actively supports in appropriate ways the kind of community-driven initiatives as outlined in this report and acknowledge the need to intensify its own efforts to meet the global challenges facing us by closely reviewing the Annual Plan and Long Term Council Community Plan.
4. **Direct** the Chief Executive Officer to report back by way of a report to the Policy and Strategy Committee, addressing the idea of a sustainability hub to bring together leading-edge thinking and creative responses to the urgent global challenges facing the City.
5. **Invite** the Long Term Council Community Plan and Annual Plan Committee to consider signing a sponsorship agreement with the Waitemata Harbour Clean Up Trust for the amount of \$40,000 per annum from 2008/2009 to 2011.

Mayoral Visit to China

This was my eight visit to Ningbo and it commemorated 10 years of our sister city relationship with this extraordinary place, a city originally suggested as an environmental challenge by the former Counsel General Mr Woo. Ningbo is a strategic business city. It has one of the few deep water ports in China and has been an open port since the opium wars. This gives it special significance in that it was forced to accept the foreign port agreement which, following the wars, would have been seen as an attack on China's sovereignty. But as it turned out it has proved to be a fantastic global opportunity for Ningbo, now one of the most progressive cities in the whole of China.

My visit coincided with the global outrage against China's Tibetan stance, outrage which bewildered the Chinese who see themselves as indeed liberators of China. A lot of the media in China was directed against the American and French press but the fact is the Chinese PR around this was not good. The recent tragic earthquake and the way the Chinese have dealt with that situation was much more successful.

I am writing this knowing many of my mayoral colleagues have not been to China and do not understand the will of Chinese to develop a western partnership. To understand China you need to understand its politics. Having effectively abandoned the Marxist / Leninist ideology, once its foundation, China moved quickly to governance on two fronts - economic growth and national pride. The problem with all flag waving, pride and patriotic fervour is that it's hard to control and it certainly can turn nasty at the drop of a little red schoolbook.



Before I left for Ningbo I was a guest speaker at the Aotea Rally. I was hugely supported in my speech about the positive future of China and the forthcoming Olympic Games which I think will be truly astonishing. Recent polls show China has got a real job to do with western countries. Seventy percent of all Americans surveyed believe China has a poor human rights record that needs to be addressed and that Americans should not go to games in Beijing. Believe me they will. In China, the will by young Chinese to become pseudo-Americans is quite overwhelming. Ningbo has just opened one of the largest malls in China. It is as large as Henderson or New Lynn and at the centre is Walmart. Who owns it and built it? Our very own Westfield. It's an amazing complex which in true Chinese style keeps traditional shops alongside Gucci and Nike. The Walmart supermarket offers the best of American consumer goods next to glass cabinets holding bullfrogs, eels, crayfish and crabs. A heady mixture of consumerism Chinese style.

Ningbo is like Beijing - rapidly becoming green and spotlessly clean. By this I mean the civic areas, the parks and the rivers where a number of boats are constantly picking up rubbish and floating debris. They proudly tell me this came from the Waitemata Harbour Clean up initiative, particularly the nets they saw on our DVD.

This China visit was around the opening of the massive and truly awesome sea bridge linking Ningbo and Shanghai - a bridge between two Chinese super powers. Twenty years in the planning and five years in the building Hangzhou Bridge has a colour scheme designed to keep drivers awake would you believe. Every 10kms the colour scheme changes from blue to yellow to red and so on. The centre of this structure has a restaurant and hotel complex. Really it needs to be seen to be believed but here's a couple of photographs.





To be at this opening was to be part of Chinese history in the making. Waitakere's friendship was acknowledged at the opening banquet. I had the acknowledgement of the mayor and Mr Bayin Chaolu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of Ningbo People's Congress, a Beijing appointed official of extreme importance and possibly a future chairman or premiere of China. He was the highest official I have met in Ningbo and we formed an instant rapport around New Zealand and the possibility of a business association with Waitakere. The official visit to China by Prime Minister Helen Clark and the signing of the Free Trade Agreement was of major importance to my visit. As I explained in my official speech to the council we now have a 10 year friendship, more than any other city and we now wish to make this the basis of a future business agreement. This is an opportunity not just for Waitakere business but New Zealand business. This idea was widely applauded and Mr Bayin Chaolu agreed to visit Waitakere and to sign my suggested trade agreement with our city. He will be here from June 1 to 3. On June 3, in the council chambers, we will sign the agreement after Mr Bayin Chaolu opens the exhibition Ningbo has donated to us to commemorate the 10 years of friendship. The exhibition is of 75 photographs framed and captioned and it will be on display at this time.

This agreement will give us the scope to take New Zealand businesses to China and to open markets for such business opportunities. I can't emphasise enough that the friendship and the work we have done is now going to pay off - more than any other city in New Zealand - and that the opportunity is enormous. It will allow us and our business partners here in Waitakere and indeed the Auckland region to grow our businesses in the next century. While in China we discussed five businesses that would like to find major New Zealand distributors - a car manufacturer, a computer company, a print business, an environmental housing project and a water purification plant. These are competitive and keen businesses and this will see the start of Waitakere Enterprise acting as the agent in finding New Zealand companies willing to partner with them. This reminds me of the situation in the 1960s when Japanese companies went looking for partners globally with brands such as Honda, Yamaha and Suzuki. Smart, local and often very small companies saw the potential and signed up to what would become world leading brands. This and these are the opportunities I opened up in this visit. I would like council's enthusiasm and endorsement of this agreement and your presence on the visit of this high level delegation.

MI-M2

My last visit to Ningbo saw us lifting the game with film and since then there has been a huge uptake by China in local filming locations. The Chinese papers have focused on the Chinese partnership in recent big hit movies *The Painted Veil* and *Forbidden Kingdom*. They now wish to look at Australia and New Zealand for future projects and film locations. An article from the *China Daily* is attached at pages M1 to M2 about filming in China.



M3-M15 I have also attached at pages M3 to M15 an article from the May 17-23 2008 issue of the *New Zealand Listener* which says what we are saying!

Mayoral Visit to the USA

M16-M17 Following my visit to China I went to California to renew our continued friendship and growth with Huntington Beach. They gave me the honour of opening the council meeting and I invited the Mayor of Huntington Beach Debbie Cook to visit us in 2009. This visit has been talked of for a number of years but now with the new Mayor in place it's going to happen. Debbie Cook has become a major spokesperson on Peak Oil and I might say not without some criticism. She has recently been taken to task in the local newspaper about her own oil investments which talking widely and vigorously about Peak Oil. I have attached an article from *The Orange Coast Voice* regarding this ongoing debate at pages M16 to M17 which shows that we are not alone at being criticised for our enthusiastic advocacy of the environment. Given Mayor Cook's slight problem, it is great to see Americans finally having some unity on national energy policy. Senator Hillary Clinton has decided on this issue to line up with Senator John McCain in pushing to suspend the federal excise tax on gasoline. It has certainly been resisted by Senator Barack Obama but what is more than scary is that America's problem is so much worse than anyone thinks. They have no energy strategy and consume large quantities of gasoline consumption due to favouring gas guzzling cars. What has been at the base of the problems is Congress bickering over whether and how to renew the investment on solar energy and to encourage investment in wind energy. Congress under President Bush failed to pass the energy bill last December and in doing so, failed to extend any stimulus for wind or solar energy production. At the same time, oil and gas kept all their credits leaving wind and solar to expire.

I had an extremely pleasing meeting with Walden Media, the producers of the Chronicles of Narnia movies which of course were filmed mostly here in Waitakere. In the coming months, they will make a decision on where the third and final film in the series will be shot and we are very much once again on the short list. Walden Media were extremely complimentary of the expertise of crews and so on down here and subject to the availability of studio space I am confident we will get the business once again.

After the meetings in Los Angeles, I headed to Alexandria, a city of around 200,000 people about 30 minutes outside of Washington DC. I was invited as a keynote speaker at a "Summit" which was aiming to develop a plan to turn Alexandria into an Eco-City. Before the summit, I made a presentation to senior staff at the Alexandria City Council and, afterwards, to Council members and staff at neighbouring Arlington County.

It was truly interesting to be in the heart of Washington DC at the time when the bitter Obama / Clinton battle raged. I think the world is now enthralled in this unbelievably tiring and stressed campaign. The mayors of the Washington area are clearly Obama fans but they acknowledged Clinton as one tough politician who refuses to give in or indeed to bow down to political pressure. Clinton is already US\$20 million in personal debt. At the heart of the American dilemma is who will make the best president. Obama is young, gifted and black but politically naïve, although that could very well be captured the Washington Mandarins who would manipulate the young president. It's certainly possible. Clinton on the other hand is experienced and clever and has a touch of Lady Macbeth. No-one in the know underestimates her as being someone who has been incredibly successful as a First Lady. The Clinton camp of Bill and Hillary have weathered amazing storms, political and personal, and they have emerged from what could have been total destruction through banishment to being admired and respected. Their survival has been nothing less than truly amazing. It is easy to draw comparisons with the Clark / Key forthcoming election and I believe we will see similar positioning here. Key already has an Obama relentless 'hope, hope, hope' campaign but he certainly doesn't have the wimp factor that haunted George WH Bush 20 years ago. You will recall that initially Obama was referred to by the media as Obambi. That tag has certainly left him in the last couple of months. The *New York Times* refers to him as the Giant Killer and he well might be. But if he becomes the President he has an enormous responsibility, indeed a daunting one, to resolve the war in Iraq and the growing crisis in America over food and energy. I don't envy him.



Both Alexandria and Arlington are historic areas. In fact Alexandria was first surveyed by a young George Washington in the 1750s. They are built next to the mighty Potomac River which presents some very real issues in terms of flooding (more about that later) and on hard, impermeable, red clay. Because of the incidence of wood-eating termites, and all that clay, virtually all of the buildings, fences and footpaths are made from brick. But good planning and excellent design mean that rather than row upon row of “same looking” blocks of clay, the streetscapes are clean looking and not as uniform as, for example, ugly terraced housing in the UK. And of course brick is long lasting. No leaky buildings there. In fact many of the homes people live in today date back to the 1800s.

M18-M19 The “Eco-Summit” (programme attached at pages M18 to M19) at which I was the keynote speaker attracted around 200 people from the community, business, and churches and so on.



An interesting tool used during the day was a key-pad voting system. Everyone received a small, numbered, pad about the size of a cell phone. After issues were discussed and debated in small groups, individuals then pushed a button to “vote” for which option they supported. The results were instantly calculated and posted on a large screen in front of the audience. It meant that - as we have found on occasion (!!!) the loudest voice or squeakiest wheel didn’t dominate the discussion. In the end everyone’s voice counted equally. Real democracy in action and I have already asked staff to look into whether we might be able to use the technology here in the future.





Communities are also engaged through what are called 'civic and citizens' associations', a bit like our resident and ratepayer groups, and mayoral appointed commissions, a bit like our mayoral taskforces. The key difference, however, is that these commissions which involve up to 10 people concerned about a particular issue such as environment, economic development, develop policy for the city and then make recommendations directly to city hall. Arlington for example has dozens of commissions and 62 registered citizens' associations so the elected members are truly hearing their communities rather than entirely taking advice from officials.

Alexandria also has an incineration system for all its municipal waste. Incineration is something I have never really got my head around - for every expert who says it generates clean, efficient energy there is another who says it's an environmental disaster. But whatever the case, Alexandria's plant (which unfortunately I did not have time to visit) generates enough electricity to power 25,000 houses a day. Kind of puts our debate about inorganic rubbish into perspective doesn't it!

What interested me most was that the town centre and urban renewal projects are without exception centred on the rail network. In Arlington, some 20 years ago, a decision was made to underground the metro line right through the town centre (sound familiar?) and the results have been absolutely staggering. High quality mixed use developments sit atop the line and then "step down" from around 14-16 storeys to 8-10, 6-8 and so on, until within a kilometre or so of the densely populated and prosperous town centre you are among single level suburban dwellings. They call it "Smart Growth"- and rightly so. I was pleased to hear also they have hard data that demonstrates what they have does work. For example, while they have single figure population growth, in the past few years that has been outstripped by passenger transport usage, which has grown a staggering 43 percent. With a population of just over 202,000 Arlington has an estimated 200,300 jobs - and more private office space than downtown Boston, Dallas or Los Angeles - a classic case of "if you build it, they will come". So for me the developments around New Lynn can't come soon enough. As I write this report, I am awaiting a copy of a PowerPoint presentation from Arlington City Chairman Jay Fassetto about its growth and transport initiatives which I hope to be able to share with you at this meeting.

One of the huge problems, however, with having heavy clay underground and so many impermeable surfaces is, of course, flooding. My hotel was without power for two days after flooding in the basement blew out the electrics and in the Alexandria town centre trailer loads of sand-bags were available to business owners. The city's arts centre (artists working studio) and retail space inside an old torpedo factory) has markings 12 feet high on the outside wall to indicate how high water levels are.





M20 We arrived In Alexandria on a sad week. They had just farewelled one of the former council members and environmentalist Ellen Pickering. The sadness was palpable and I acknowledged it in my addresses to the city officials and to the community. Her obituary in the *Alexandria Gazette* is attached at page M20. She is of interest to all local politicians as she obviously had such a commitment to her community over many, many years. Americans, to their credit, acknowledge their best and brightest.

M21-M23 Another article from another newspaper is attached at pages M21 to M23. Oh for such gentle treatment from media when we discuss and adopt our budgets.

A resilient city - the BIG challenge

In 1992 when we were starting out with the idea we needed to take environmental issues more seriously to be a sustainable city, little did we know how right we were! But now I think we have a much more urgent task.

Let me start at the beginning. The two toughest challenges facing humankind at the start of the 21st century are climate change and Peak Oil. The former is well documented and very visible in the media and Waitakere, as well as many other organisations, is working on it. Peak Oil however remains under the radar. When I talk to people in the street it is clear few people have any inkling of the depth and breadth of change ahead of us or how soon it could be upon us. Recent price rises give some indication of the responses we can expect - denial, the government got to cut its take, regulate fuel retailers etc. Very little is said about what all of us need to do.

Peak Oil is not news to many of us. We have had a series of speakers, seen films and read the books of Jonathan Porritt, Al Gore, James Kunstler, Richard Heinberg, Jarrod Diamond and this year George Monbiot all saying the same thing. Life will be quite different. But few people are taking that seriously and even fewer are doing anything to prepare themselves for such change.



At present you might fill your car with petrol, maybe \$100 a fill. What happens when it is \$200, then \$300.....and your wages stay the same? All the clothing, shoes, food, machinery, cars and trucks that have oil as a key ingredient in making or functioning, what sort of effect will that have? I have no doubt the rich and even some of the middle class will find ways to survive more easily but what happens to the poor and vulnerable when we have decreasing amounts of oil to fuel our industrialised way of life.

To understand the degree to which this will affect the industrial world here's the opening paragraph of an executive summary of a report prepared for the United States government in 2005 by an agency of experts in risk management and oil analysis - the Hirsch report. The United States government was not expecting the result of this report but it was blunt:

"The peaking of world oil production presents the US and the world with an unprecedented risk management problem. As peaking is approached liquid fuel prices and price volatility will decrease dramatically and without timely mitigation the economic, social and political costs will be unprecedented. Viable mitigation options exist on both the supply and demand sides but to have substantial impact they must be initiated more than a decade in advance of peaking."

For me there is no doubt we are on the brink of a completely different way of life, one we need to prepare for with urgency and determination. As a council we need to 'up the ante' much faster to prepare people to be more resilient.

How can we prepare for extreme weather events, droughts, floods, storms? Have we left enough land to feed people? I look at our sections and don't see many gardens left. I see enormous stretches of lawn we religiously mow each week and wonder why. Or I see small sections covered with concrete. Look at road berms which fulfil little purpose. Look at exotic street trees that are largely decorative and could be fruit trees feeding people. How are people going to feed themselves when food prices rise as we see in the paper with increasing regularity

We have been carrying out a wide range of important initiatives in this City, from urban regeneration to city centre shaping, to modelling sustainable building in all our new civic buildings, to successfully achieving the double tracking of our rail line. We are developing neighbourhood accessibility plans and school travel plans, encouraging more walking school buses and workplace travel plans, starting to retrofit the City to have more sustainable housing stock and overall I think we are encouraging our "localness".

And we have made amazing progress in the past 16 years. But the change we are facing now is much more severe and may come on faster than we thought. We need to intensify our efforts around some issues and lessen them on others that may not be so critical. I firmly believe we need to very carefully assess our direction and how we are investing our ratepayers' money. I think there are three important aims we need more focus on: help people to *understand* what is facing them, help people to *work out for themselves* what can they actually *do* about it and get our minds around thinking differently.

Communication and creative design

It is crystal clear to me we have to be much more creative in our communication and interaction with our communities when explaining what is happening and what is coming. I look at the world class talent we have in this city in the visual arts, music, theatre and film. I look at the very effective "Wa\$ted" TV series and think why are we not doing more of that? We have people retrofitting, role modelling more sustainable houses in the city but who knows about them? Who sees them? A microscopic number of people. We have leading edge experts in this city but how do we use this expertise? We have all the modern methods of blogging, My Space, Facebook etc. How are we using these?



And just as importantly we need to be reaching people's hearts, not just their minds and some of it needs to be fun! People don't want to be lectured at, they don't want to be sitting in front of endless power points in draughty halls, and we don't want to be talking *at* people. We need to *involve* them and it needs to be in their language, a style that suits their lives, where they are and by people they feel comfortable with.

It strikes me we are well placed to launch a leading edge initiative here. Maybe it is called a **Centre for Creative Resilience**? Maybe it's **The Sustainability Hub**? You may have a better name for it but you will get my drift. It could focus minds on a whole range of local and creative responses to global pressures. It could put together creative tools and experiences that will help people understand and do things differently. Look at the impact of the "*End of Suburbia*" and Al Gore's "*An Inconvenient Truth*." They are continuing to inspire people. The centre could create tools for the communities and tools for us.

Already local community people are creating much more powerful ways of reaching hearts and minds and some of our staff are doing really creative stuff. Rewi Spraggon, from our Maori unit - carver extraordinaire, musician and communicator - is starting to be involved in Maori TV. We have already produced great videos about the journey of this city that continue to inspire people both here and overseas. These are just a couple of examples - there's many more.

In Britain, local government has its own web-based television linkages with videos, case studies, sharing information across the country. Could we be a hub for that sort of initiatives? We have the examples and we have the experts. Why not share those? It could tap into the depth of talent already in the city and bring in others from across the region.

It could also be the catalyst for bringing together people who are concentrating on creative design, designing products and services differently -the '*Cradle to Cradle*' concept where products are designed right from the start to be able to sit within our natural ecological cycle - not to be chucked into a landfill at the end of their lives. This is real leading edge material. Few people are thinking this way. They are still concentrating on using fewer resources rather than using them differently. I have already been approached by a young man who has recently shifted into the city, Carl Chenery, who has asked me to lead a delegation to Frankfurt later in the year where this sort of approach is the focus. This is an opportunity to really concentrate on the economic development side of the sustainability equation, the green business niche market, a market we have not grabbed in a proactive way at all over these years. This is a whole new way of thinking. Let's grab it!

So a centre like this could concentrate on getting the message across, inspiring people to act, think and design *differently*. The need is there and it's enormous. Funding would need to be found but this is a local, regional, and national need. With people becoming less sceptical maybe funding is starting to flow in that direction.

It strikes me the Corban Estate would be a brilliant location for such a centre. It has the creative arts, it has the stream, it's on the railway line and it's near the film studios. People have done stalwart work in thinking about this place over the years and I am not dismissing that work at all. But maybe this is a chance for a different approach, a nexus of creativity, not something that is carefully structured but a place where people can think differently, spin off each other, do the real grunt work that we need to face the future but with hope not gloom.

Community Action

This links perfectly with the need to engage our communities more effectively so they understand the need for change. Waitakere has always prided itself on its innovative community engagement - its social and cultural inclusiveness and with good reason. It was heart warming to hear Awa Hudson (former deputy Mayor of Waitemata City Council) give us such a pat on the back at the Community Governance Forum.



But I think we need to go further given the urgency with which we need to act. To engage our communities and help them prepare for the future. I know we are doing this already and doing it well, but we need more of it and faster. We need to work out how the council can support these initiatives more proactively! We could dither about waiting for technology or central government leaders to solve the problem for us but that's a high risk option and I've never been one for sitting in the wings waiting. We certainly have a responsibility as councillors and ratepayers to act in this regard. It's about us stepping up and taking on a leadership role to get people involved.

Project Twin Streams

We already have a leading edge example of this kind of way of working in Project Twin Streams. But we only have a few of these programmes (Massey Matters is another). We need more. We could learn a lot from Project Twin Streams. It started five years ago focused on the replanting of 56kms of riparian margin, involving 10,000 people over this period. But *the way of doing that* was to involve the community in quite a different way from many traditional council led ways. This was and still does challenge council to re-look at how it does things and the difference between doing things *for* people, and doing things *alongside* people. It has funded local people to lead the programmes. And fun and creativity were always core elements of it - music, banners, kids' games, drama. If anyone has seen the Kids 4 Drama show they will know how powerful creativity is. Two troops of four young people singing and acting have played to 10,000 young people in our city - every school in fact - and have letters from children of all ages inspired by them.

Now the project is moving naturally into sustainable living in preparing people for a very different future, actions that will help people be more resilient and better able to face the challenges in the way they live in their homes and neighbourhoods. The community development model that is being used is one driven and grounded in the community - learning, yes, capacity building, yes, but still with fun and creativity at its heart.

So community clusters in Ranui, Swanson, Glen Eden, Henderson, Henderson South, McLaren Park, Massey and West Harbour are being challenged, stimulated, encouraged and cheered on in ways they can hear, understand and feel. The interrelationship between Peak Oil and climate change means there is an incredibly challenging journey and many people are still at step one.

There is a defined process of visioning, working through barriers and actions. The holistic way of approaching means that communities can identify possible economic opportunities for example and all of us can look for training opportunities round the new technologies, new horticultural enterprises, relearning some of the old skills we have lost in this age of cheap and plentiful oil. The real mark of success of this process is that the local community itself has been questioning, thinking, observing and wanting to learn more. A truly community driven model and from all international research the one which much more likely to lead to lasting behaviour change.

Transition Towns

A very interesting model was brought to me by Laurence Boomert and James Samuel called Transition Towns. This is a British based model which they presented to the last Policy and Strategy Committee meeting, a presentation which was well made and well received. The initiative was started by Rob Hopkins who was interviewed on national radio, a transcript which I attached to a previous mayoral report. It has only been in place for 18 months in the UK but has been picked up by a number of communities and is based on very similar principles to the Project Twin Streams model. When you read Rob's book it is obvious that alongside the important messages are the importance of stimulation, fun, engagement, supportive leadership, capacity building, empowerment and inclusion. And importantly to be not council but community driven and owned.



Let me tell you, Transition Towns is not whacky thinking or 'loose cannon'. Nor really is it a new idea. It's been going on globally and I certainly heard and read about it when I was in the States. And there are certainly some amazing initiatives in this regard, especially around transportation. Bicycles are a huge thing in Washington and thanks to our cycling and transportation strategy I know we are on the right track. I know not all councillors agree with our priority to provide cycle lanes but believe me they are vital to a city's future and indeed the future of the planet. Transition Towns makes really good global sense and I think you will find that the things we are looking at here in Waitakere are rapidly becoming mainstream. The Transition model outlined in the book *"The Transition Handbook"* is underpinned by the recognition in Britain that

- Climate change and Peak Oil require urgent action;
- Life with less energy use is inevitable and it is better to plan for it than be taken by surprise;
- Industrial society has lost the resilience to be able to cope with energy shocks;
- We have to act together and we have to act now;
- Regarding the world economy and the consumption patters within it, as long as the laws of physics apply, infinite growth within a finite system (such as planet earth) simply isn't possible;
- We demonstrated phenomenal levels of ingenuity and intelligence as we raced up the energy curve over the past 150 years and there's no reason why we can't use those qualities and more as we negotiate our way down from the peak of the energy mountain;
- If we plan and act early enough, and use our creativity and cooperation, to unleash the genius within our local communities we can build a future that could be far more fulfilling and enriching, more connected and more gentle on the ear than the lifestyles we have today.

The key elements of the journey in the first couple of years are:

- **Set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset** - A core team is put in place to drive the project forward during the initial phases, handing over later to leaders that have emerged;
- **Awareness-raising** - Identifies allies, builds networks and prepares the community for the launch of the transition initiative. Creating understanding of the potential effects of both Peak Oil and climate change - the need to increase community resilience, and a reduction in carbon footprints. Screenings of key movies along with talks by experts, articles in local papers, interviews on radio, presentations to existing groups including schools, are also part of the toolkit;
- **Lay the foundations** - Networking with existing groups and activities, making clear the initiative is designed to incorporate their efforts and inputs by looking at the future in a new way. Giving them a concise and accessible overview of Peak Oil, what it means, how it relates to climate change, how it might affect the community in question and the key challenges it presents. How might a Transition Initiative be a catalyst for getting the community to explore solutions and to begin thinking about grassroots mitigation strategies?
- **Organise a 'great unleashing'** -: About six months to a year later, this aims to create a memorable milestone to mark the project's 'coming of age', moves it into the community at large, builds a momentum to propel the initiative forward for the next period of its work and celebrates the community's desire to take action. It aims to bring people up to speed on Peak Oil and Climate Change in a positive way rather than doom and gloom;
- **Form working groups** - A number of smaller groups are set up to focus on specific aspects of the process of developing an "Energy Descent Action plan" tapping into the community expertise. Each of these groups is trying to determine the best ways of building community resilience and reducing the carbon footprint. Their solutions form the backbone of an Energy Descent Action plan;



- **Use Open Space Method** - This method of discussion can be useful. A large group of people comes together to explore a particular topic or issue with no agenda, no timetable, no obvious coordinator and no minute takes. It is one way of working which this model finds successful;
- **Develop 'visible practical manifestations' of the project** - Creating practical, high visibility projects which will contribute to an Energy Descent Action Plan;
- **Facilitate re-skilling** - Reverse the deskilling' of the past 40 years by offering training in a range of skills like repairing, cooking, cycle maintenance, natural building, loft insulation, dyeing, herbal walks, gardening;
- Build a bridge to local government: recognition that local government might offer support in a number of ways.

I am sure Waitakere would welcome that!

- **Honour the elders** - Build on existing skills in the community who remember what life was like without cheap oil;
- **"Let it go where it wants to go"**...recognition that these sorts of initiatives can't be controlled by anyone. They need to forge their own paths.
- **Create an Energy Descent Plan** - Each working group puts together their practical actions to increase community resilience and reduce the carbon footprint into an Energy Descent Action Plan owned by the community.

How should council support this?

We need to walk that fine line of providing support so our communities lead change. We are a big organisation and there are things we can do well, but there are times we need to leave space for others to lead.

Transition Towns provides us with another excellent community driven model and I would urge Waitakere as a city and as a community to support initiatives from people in our community. It is great we have proactive NGOs like Eco Matters Environmental Trust, the Project Twin Streams Community organisations and initiatives like Massey Matters, the Three Waters, Green Network. We need a range of these models to see what flourishes where, like ecosystems, some are more appropriate for parts of our community than others. We will need a range of approaches if we are to move forward in a much sharper more focussed way to help prepare our communities for a very different future. Council needs to have its own actions. So does the region and the country but community led initiatives need to be right up there with them. I will be right there cheering our communities on.

M24-M27 A really good example of this kind of thinking is attached at pages M24 to M26. The article, published in the *New York Times* is all about New Yorkers progressing from growing basil and tomatoes in their widow boxes to raising fruits and vegetables, not just to feed their families but to sell to people on their block. Read the story and let me know what you think but I believe we could do something like this in terms of the Oratia Farmers market. I have also attached at page M27 an article from the *Los Angeles Times* about YAWNs - Young and Wealthy but Normal. I am sure you will find these articles as interesting as I did.



Milestones

Leataata O le Tupulaga Preschool Blessing

I was delighted to attend and speak at the blessing at the pre-school in Massey on Thursday, 24 April 2008. I was in esteemed company - the Prime Minister Helen Clark, Minister of Education and local MP Chris Carter, Waitakere MP Lynne Pillay and several others were all there. But the true 'celebrity' and woman of the moment was Leata Tipi, a true taonga of Waitakere. The pre-school was her vision and foresight. Leata dreams big and makes things happen - with a huge smile on her face. She was clearly very proud to have so many distinguished guests at her opening and rightly so but they were there to honour her and the great work she does, as well as her accomplishments. This preschool is a symbol of the renewed sense of connection and hope for the future in West Harbour. The centre is one of the most successful and is a benchmark for other Pacific centres. It educates the children but it also educates the parents and the grandparents at the same time. Parents and grandparents are key people to target to be involved in the children's learning. In Massey, the home of the largest ever social development project council has led (Massey Matters), people are seeing and believing they can make a difference. All sorts is going on - street barbecues, street clean ups and planting days. It's an amazing project and it's going very well indeed. Congratulations to everyone involved and thanks for the hard work, effort and success to date.

Korean Delegation

Just a short time after the preschool opening I welcomed a Korean delegation to Waitakere Central. It was a small party but an extremely important one. The main visitor was Mr Won Hee-ryang, a member of the Republic of Korea National Assembly. The others were Mr Won's wife Mrs Kang, a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Ruth Delaney from the New Zealand Parliament. Mr Won was in New Zealand as this year's Prime Minister's Fellow. The fellow programme for the Republic of Korea was established following the PM's visit to Korea in May 2001. It's a key part of New Zealand's efforts to strengthen and broaden the bilateral relationship. Mr Won is considered a likely future leader of the Grand National Party and he was particularly interested in New Zealand's welfare systems, energy resources and policy, government sector reform and education.

Waitakere was 'picked' as a destination because of his interest in energy issues so it was with pride I told him about our eco city journey and our sustainable public buildings. I also told him about our burgeoning film industry and how that came about. He was particularly interested in the filming in our new studio of Korean movie Laundry Warrior starring the very famous Jang Don-Gun and produced by Lee Joo-ick. Mr Won was very keen to have an ongoing relationship with Waitakere in terms of the environment and film and I think it's a relationship that will be mutually beneficial. Thanks to Warahi and the team for the powhiri. The delegation was completely overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome but not so overwhelmed it couldn't respond with a very good rendition of Pökarekare ana in Korean.

Waitemata Harbour Clean Up Trust

In 2002 I was approached by a young environmentalist Hayden Smith with the view of cleaning up the Waitemata Harbour. Hayden and I observed increasing amounts of rubbish making its way to sea via roadways and stormwater channels often clogging up streams and estuaries along the way.

With the support of local councils and corporate sponsorship, funding was obtained to commission a company to raise awareness about litter issues and to carry out litter removal in the inner gulf. The Ports of Auckland provided a 6.5 metre boat, the *Phil Warren*, for litter retrieval and removal.



The boat was named in recognition of the environmental initiatives led by the late Phil Warren while he was chairperson of the Auckland Regional Council.

The Waitemata Harbour Clean up Trust was formed and has been running successfully for the past six years. Waitakere and our neighbouring cities have sponsored this at \$30,000 per annum - which is soon to expire.

Along with other Auckland Territorial Local Authorities I am seeking to renew our commitment to the trust and increase this sponsorship to \$40,000 for a further three years. The other authorities have already done so. The budget sits with Solid Waste and is awaiting this approval. I wish us to sign a sponsorship agreement for the term 2008/9 to 2011.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE