

# HOBSONVILLE

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH URBAN DESIGN

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***How can the concept of sustainability become translated into urban design?***

This presentation outlines the development of urban design concepts for the former Hobsonville Airbase in Waitakere City, Auckland, based on a Sustainable Development Framework and associated indicators. The resulting concept plans are compared to conventional development practices and outcomes.

The Government of New Zealand is making a major commitment to creating a flagship development that is successful in environmental, economic, social and cultural terms. In 2002 the Government identified the potential for the former Hobsonville airbase in Waitakere City, Auckland to provide housing and become a showcase of sustainable development principles. In 2005 the Hobsonville Land Company (HLC) was established (through the Housing New Zealand Corporation) in order to achieve this objective.

The starting point for the project was the HLC Board of Director's vision for the site: *“to set new benchmarks for sustainable urban development within New Zealand and to build a community that is available to people from all sectors of society”*.

The Hobsonville development is intended as a demonstration project for Government strategies covering sustainable cities, urban design and housing, along with other initiatives. The project is also closely aligned with regional planning initiatives (the Auckland Regional Growth, Land Transport and Economic Development Strategies) and the planning objectives of Waitakere City Council.

The design process was carefully structured in order to ensure that the urban design concepts reflected 'best practice' sustainable development principles and in addition the unique values of the site itself. The project brief was to first generate a Sustainable Development Framework, translate this into design principles, and only then to develop a preferred urban design concept.

The urban design concepts developed by the project team (Boffa Miskell Ltd, together with Architectus, Geoffrey Walker Urban Design, Landcare Research, Market Economics, Flow, Salmond Reed Architects and Fraser Thomas) envision:

- Efficient use of land, resources and energy.
- An integrated community with 2500-3000 homes and employment generation of around 2000 jobs on the site including a proposed marine industry precinct.
- A mix of diverse, 'live-work-play' land uses.

- A wide range of housing types and forms of tenure in all neighbourhoods, allowing housing choice and social interaction between household types, age and income groups.
- Opportunities for affordable home ownership as well as market housing. Up to 15% of the total number of homes is proposed affordable housing, with up to a further 15% social rental housing.
- The close integration of land use and rapid transit (bus and ferry) – all residents within 10 minute walk of rapid transit.
- An interconnected hierarchy of street types, designed for transit, cycling, walking and as high amenity and active public open spaces – as well as for motor vehicles.
- High connectivity - easy to get from homes to work, education, recreation, shops and services.
- A strong solar orientation allowing potential for both passive heating and photovoltaic generation.
- Protection and conservation of heritage and character features, trees and buildings as well as the original “City Beautiful” layout of the base
- The central Greenway as Hobsonville’s ‘front lawn’ and central spine accommodating rapid transit, cycling and walking, ecological functions, stormwater treatment / storage, community gardens, recreation and community facilities and events
- A network of reserves supporting social interaction, recreation, ecological protection and interpretation
- The storage and re-use of storm-water and its treatment to a high standard so as to protect the Upper Waitemata Harbour and reduce demands on water supplies.

The sustainable development approach has resulted in a plan that stands in positive contrast to the alternative of a conventional development. The proposed plan makes much more efficient use of land, sets aside more land for recreation and conservation, and achieves a better balance of residential, commercial, institutional and other land uses in order to create ‘a great place to live and work’.