

06 May 2009

Draft Long Term Council Community Plan 2009 – 19.

Submission on behalf of the Long Bay-Okura Great Park Society

The Long Bay-Okura Great Park Society congratulates the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) on the presentation of an attractive, clear and comprehensive blueprint to guide the development of the Auckland region over the next ten years.

The Long Bay-Okura Great Park Society, being a Charitable Society registered under the Act, is a community interest group of approximately 1600 members formed in 1996 following the movement of the Auckland Metropolitan Urban Limit from Glenvar Road to Vaughan's Road at Long Bay, North Shore City. Long Bay Regional Park and the adjacent Long Bay beach lie within the Auckland Metropolitan Limit and are the most popular of the Auckland regional parks and beaches, receiving very heavy patronage. The Park lies adjacent to the Long Bay-Okura Marine Reserve located within the Hauraki Maritime Park. The Society welcomed the purchase of 38.5 hectares of land at Piripiri Point by the North Shore City Council (NSCC) in 2002, and the further purchase of 5.8 hectares by the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) in 2003.

The Society is a party to the ongoing Environment Court Appeal against the Long Bay Structure Plan along with the ARC and others. We take this opportunity to record our appreciation of the level of co-operation and consensus on issues involved that has developed between our two organizations during the case. Such issues include protection of the backdrop to Long Bay Regional Park, protection of the archaeological sites and storm water control.

With regard to the Draft Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), the Society's principal interests lie in the availability of clean air and water, and open green space which are vital to the physical and spiritual health of the people of the region.

In general the Society is in accord with the policies proposed in the Draft Plan within our areas of interest.

Regional parks (P123)

We commend the ARC that it is actively seeking to purchase and acquire more parkland and will bring forward the funding programme in the LTCCP 2006-2016 (Pp 7,123). We also commend that priority will be given to the provision of further urban regional parks. Within this policy, we strongly urge that special priority be given to the purchase of additional strategic areas on the Long Bay – Okura Peninsula (not necessarily restricted to the area of the Long Bay Structure Plan) to provide for the passive recreational needs of the burgeoning population of the region.

We note with particular interest that you are planning now for the needs of current and future generations by acquiring land to provide recreational open space and to protect our landscapes, native bush, wetlands and wildlife. (P.123). We urge that the slip terrace topography of the Awaruku Ridge at Long Bay is one such landscape worthy of protection. This is the last remaining example of this geological type remaining on the North Shore and possibly in the region. With earthworks scheduled by Landco to commence in October 2010, it is vital that a fully representative area of this type of typography be secured. We emphasise that the Long Bay-Okura peninsula represents a unique costal complex of marine reserve, beach, sandstone cliffs, slip terrace typography, wetlands and archaeological sites with absolutely iconic gulf views which should be preserved in toto for the enjoyment of future generations in perpetuity.

Stormwater management

We are pleased to note the acknowledgement that ‘stormwater has the largest impact on the on the region’s marine ecosystems and urban streams, and can adversely affect the regional community’s social, cultural and economic values’. (P.74). In this regard, the Society is seriously concerned that all the provisions of the Environment Court decisions and ensuing Resource Consent provisions for the urban development at Long Bay are fulfilled in spirit and in substance. Because of the scale of the development and seriousness of potential consequences of mismanagement, we strongly urge the ARC to maintain a high level of vigilance over the earth moving operations (including control of open earthworks areas, run-off during earthmoving phases, subsequent storm water catchment and treatment etc).for which it has administrative responsibility,

Royal Commission – Auckland governance

Our overriding concern with the Draft Plan is not so much its contents as with its future implementation under the Auckland SuperCity scenario.

We hold grave concerns as to the ability or facility for local interest groups such as our Society (despite its metropolitan and, indeed, national focus) being heard in the ‘corridors of power’ in Queen Street amid the clamour of vested interests for advancement of the ‘CBD Big Picture’. We are concerned as to the future of ARC’s assets such as Long Bay Regional Park following transfer to SuperCity ownership.

According to the Royal Commission’s proposal, Long Bay was to lie within the new Waitemata City while Okura would be in Rodney. However, we understand that at present, there is no clear direction as proposed council boundaries under the revised Government proposal. We urge that the ARC endeavours to ensure the whole of the Long Bay-Okura peninsula remains within a single authority. It would be undesirable for the management of Long Bay-Okura parkland area to lie within two separate council jurisdictions possibly with differing agendas.

Bernard Stanley
Deputy Convenor
Long Bay-Okura Great Park Society