Urban growth management under the Resource Management Act

- What is urban growth management in a New Zealand context
- How has it evolved since the RMA
- How well does the RMA serve high quality urban growth management
- What are the implications for RMA reform
What is urban growth management

- Managing growth (active not passive)
  - Population, households and all the related paraphernalia
  - Business, employment, infrastructure
- Protecting resources and natural systems – air, water, coast, soil, flora and fauna, natural environments
- Protecting places – productive lands (rural areas), heritage areas,
- Making and remaking of places for living - drama, beauty, exchanges, opportunity, belonging, inspirational
- Framed by statute (LGA, RMA) policies and actions of Government, regional and local government, infrastructure providers
- Not just the planners
- Purposeful
- Integrated and comprehensive
- Managing the effects, managing the growth or stoking the growth
What is urban growth management

- As practised by planners
  - Largely under the LGA and the RMA
  - Growth strategies or urban development strategies
    - Regional growth strategy in Auckland
    - Smart Growth in Bay of Plenty
    - Regional growth strategy in Wellington
    - Urban growth strategy in Christchurch
    - Tomorrow’s Queenstown
    - Future planning framework in Auckland City
  - Given statutory teeth through LTCCP (money and actions) and under RMA through regional policy statements and district plans
What is urban growth management

- Planners use many tools
  - Policy documents and plans
  - Identify town centres and transport corridors for intensification
  - Identify areas for greenfield development
    - Structure planning, staging, sequencing
  - Urban boundaries
  - Urban zones
  - Specialist urban renewal projects and agencies
  - Spatial plans, infrastructure plans, land transport plans
  - Protection of areas and resources is still hard to achieve
A historical context

- A community scale review of the environment and placing of human habitation in suitable areas to minimise risk, avoid hazard, enable practical settlement, and enhance comfort and amenity
  - Maori were keen readers of the environment
  - Early colonial settlers came well armed with surveyors and settlement companies – towns well chosen and laid out on an English model
- Auckland metropolitan urban limits have been in place since the 1960’s – NOT A NEW INVENTION
A strategic context

- You don’t need urban growth management if there is little growth.
- Most of New Zealand growth in the next 25 years will be in Auckland, Canterbury, Wellington and Waikato regions— and Auckland will have the giant share.
- Not a New Zealand wide issue.
- So we do not need urban limits everywhere.
Who gets the growth – our biggest cities get bigger

Auckland is 33% of population in 2006 – but 1 in 2 new New Zealanders will be an Aucklander

Christchurch easily becomes our number 2 city, followed by Wellington and Hamilton
But the SuperCity becomes even more SuperSized

Projected population 2006 and 2031

Series1
Series2
An Auckland issue first and foremost

- And limited to a few other regions
- At a micro level may affect a few towns and cities
- But it is the regional scale issue that needs a much more sophisticated response than a rural town or provincial city – when figuring out which paddock is easiest to subdivide next
How has growth management evolved under the RMA

- RPS – only Auckland had a well developed urban growth management policy (1993) – a legacy from long standing regional planning – but fought by MfE to EC – RGS – ATSAP - RMA amendment - LGAAA – Change 6
  - Has resulted in strong urban growth footprint in district plans – intensification, urban fence, centres and corridors, land use and transport connection
- Of the regions Bay of Plenty and Canterbury are following at regional level – but not Waikato at this stage – and well Wellington being Wellington is focusing on growth not growth management
- Has reinforced the regional level as a directive instrument (district plans to give effect to – plus prioritization of regionally important infrastructure)
Does the RMA deliver high quality urban growth management

- It can - in its current cloak it enables urban growth management – and a good hierarchy of regional to district
- Urban design has flourished… slowly
- But
  - Inadequate integrated planning
  - Governance structures have led to perverse outcomes
  - We still think the recent past is our future
  - And allowed the tyranny of the conservative over analysis and vision
  - And the RPS has been used as a super-district plan
  - Some truly awful results on the ground have been born of the RMA era
- Good policy is essential, great delivery is critical
Implications for RMA reform

- It doesn’t all have to be in the RMA
- RESOURCE management
- Very important to get it right in a few parts of the country – so focus on them not the RMA
- Look to the Royal Commission on Auckland
  - Governance
  - Spatial plan
- Redevelopment in urban areas is the most significant challenge
- And building greenfields of the future not the past
- Don’t take away very important tools
  - Engage with the issues and solve the issues
  - Finesse not a sledgehammer
  - Smarts not rhetoric
Train bus - for road and rail
1915