

Freepost Authority 237170
Auckland Council
The Auckland Plan
Private Bag 92300
Auckland 1142

31 October 2011

Submission to Auckland Council from Project Twin Streams on the Draft Auckland Plan

Introduction

Project Twin Streams is a large-scale environmental restoration and stormwater management project. It is working to improve water quality in Waitakere streams by revegetating 56kms of streambanks with native trees and shrubs, and purchasing properties within the flood plain for their removal.

Project Twin Streams engages local residents through partnering with local community organisations to deliver the planting program. Project Twin Streams is a local project with regional benefits. It works with nature and communities to improve the health of our waterways and harbour.

Project Twin Streams is dedicated to achieving the vision of a healthy, thriving catchment with strong, connected communities. We have a seven year history of building and maintaining relationships with local government and communities, undertaking and supporting environmental restoration initiatives and fostering creative, collaborative actions that increase involvement, understanding and participation.

In order for environmental initiatives to be sustainable in the future, it is important to acknowledge that community participation is a vital aspect to ensure longevity of restoration efforts. Streams are flowing entities in the landscape, they are not confined to public land and it is crucial that the community are empowered to understand the impacts of human use of land on streams and ways that they can support environmental restoration in their neighbourhoods. Project Twin Stream's model of community development achieves connected communities through creative engagement, education and hands-on environmental actions.

Project Twin Streams already works "*collaboratively and as partners*" on many priorities identified in the Draft Auckland Plan. The Draft Auckland Plan envisions that "*Everyone enjoys Auckland's natural and marine heritage and the world recognises the way we protect and care for it*". This is an ambitious and inspirational vision. It is achievable, provided there is more resourcing for environmental projects with strong community development components.

Project Twin Streams and the identified Transformational Shifts for Auckland

1. Auckland's Children and Young People

Project Twin Streams supports endeavours to accelerate the prospects of children and young people. PTS currently works with both children and young people to engage them in environmental restoration activities providing exposure to skilled professionals and a range of skills and activities.

We believe that empowering young people to take an active interest in their local environment contributes to their sense of community connectedness and inclusion. Our work positively contributes to young people's well-being, training opportunities and aspirations.

2. Environmental action and green growth

PTS fully supports a commitment to place more concerted effort into protecting and restoring the environment. Alongside the hands-on community approach to restoring and enhancing the environment, PTS educates people about sustainable behaviour change, ecosystems, water and how our daily lives impact biodiversity and natural resources. We recommend the Auckland Plan prioritises community education about water management, waste minimisation, stormwater issues and land use.

Strong policies and planning to support this education are required to fight against rural sprawl – low quality lifestyle block densification. The “Rural-Urban Boundary” is needed for targeted infrastructure investment – because we want an Auckland that can grow, without growing out of control. Future residential development in rural Auckland should be accommodated within urban nodes in order to maintain a pastoral or rural landscape across much of the rural area.

PTS is highly supportive of a spatial planning initiative in the Hauraki Gulf that takes an integrated catchment-to-the-sea approach by addressing catchment-based issues which affect the marine area such as sedimentation, nutrient run off and heavy metal contamination as well as activities in the marine area such as commercial and recreational fishing, shipping, aquaculture and coastal development. We encourage the Council to prioritise this in its Long Term Plan.

3. Public transport

As mayor Len Brown states, “the time has come to invest in a modern, integrated and convenient public transport system” which includes cycleways. Much can be learnt from the PTS cycleway, which includes stormwater education, an environmental experience, arts and community engagement as part of their design. PTS supports an outstanding public transport system, and believes that improved public transport infrastructure is a priority for any new and existing urban development. We also strongly support the Regional Cycle Network with more funding, more off-road cycleways, and with more bold, quality projects that will help reduce our reliance on individual vehicles, thus reduce stormwater impacts from transportation.

4. Urban living

PTS supports water sensitive planning and development that prioritises the protection and enhancement of our waterways. Intensive riparian planting is one way to effectively reduce contaminants reaching waterways in an urban environment. Urban living is a stormwater issue, and PTS is part of the stormwater solution. PTS has made a radical difference to urban living in Waitakere and the connectedness of communities in an environmentally friendly way. PTS has developed green spaces, cycle-ways, art-spaces, orchards, recreation, tourism opportunities, community gardens, Te Pa Harekeke (a flax garden), Te Maara Oranga (a Rongoa Maori garden), and educational signage.

We want the Auckland Plan to improve the current management of stormwater and ensure the demands of future population growth are met in a way that protects, expands and enhances the blue-green network.

5. Radically raise living standards

PTS recommends a commitment to the inclusion of Community Economic Development (CED) targets and actions within Auckland's Economic Development Strategy. CED is an important opportunity for the economic and social development of Auckland as a whole. CED is local people being empowered to take responsibility for their economic future. CED strengthens and stabilizes local economies through the enhancement of business skills, financial sustainability and strengthening of community organisations. It creates jobs, often for low-skilled workers, high needs youth, and marginalised people, thus there is the potential for CED to contribute greatly to raising living standards across Auckland.

Project Twin Streams' alignment with The Draft Auckland Plan's Strategic Directions:

- To create a strong, inclusive and equitable society that ensures opportunity for all Aucklanders
PTS supports working in a place-based, creative way with communities that provides dynamic ways for engaging with one another through environmental action.
- Enable maori aspirations through recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and customary rights
PTS supports the importance of working with mana whenua to ensure their aspirations for stream restoration and articulating their stories are given due respect and prominence within environmental programmes. PTS is proud to have the support of the local mana whenua for our west Auckland area – Te Kawerau a Maki. PTS supports Nga Iwi Maori aspirations by ensuring maori taonga is upheld where possible (such as restoring waterways, native flora and fauna; use of te reo maori; incorporating public maori art; Te Pa Harakeke and Te Maara Orangagardens).
- Integrating arts, culture, heritage and lifestyle into our daily lives
PTS supports the daily integration of arts in communities. PTS has proven how creative engagement, culture, and heritage can be integrated in an environmental project.
- Acknowledge that nature and people are inseparable
PTS strongly supports that nature and people are inseparable. This is a key kaupapa and serves as the foundation for the work of PTS. We want the Auckland Plan to prioritise and provide more objectives on how the inseparability of nature and people will be resourced.
- Contribute to tackling climate change and increasing energy resilience
PTS strongly supports opportunities to educate communities and encourage more sustainable behaviours. We support better public transport and reducing reliance on cars, which not only positively impact on stormwater but also contributes to lowering carbon emissions and a reliance on fossil fuels for energy.
- To plan, deliver and maintain quality infrastructure to make Auckland liveable and resilient
PTS supports access to healthy water, the recreational use of our waterways, and a better understanding of sustainable lifestyle choices as part of making Auckland liveable and resilient.

We recommend that the Auckland Plan consolidates and regionalises best practice for catchment management. We want the Auckland Plan to prioritise and resource sustainable catchment projects.

In summary:

PTS is an internationally recognised leader in stormwater projects and environmental restoration in urban centres. PTS believes that the Auckland Plan can achieve a “Green Auckland” and be the most liveable city in the world if:

- Resilient, connected communities are recognised as the heart and soul of our city.
- Te Kawerau a Maki is provided unique status that acknowledges their right to participate contribute and influence the future planning of Tamaki Makaurau and PTS.
- That Auckland’s unique environment is protected for future generations to enjoy.
- Rural-urban boundaries are enforced to protect against sprawl and increasing stormwater impacts.
- Funding for public transportation, including cycleways and walkways, are prioritised in existing and new development.
- The prospects of children and young people are prioritised.

We strongly support the transformational shifts for Auckland and agree with Mayor Brown that the “nature and people are inseparable”. We believe that communities must be enabled to responsibly protect and restore Auckland’s environment.

Respectfully yours,

- Project Twin Streams Henderson Creek
- Project Twin Streams Glen Eden