

# Memorandum via email

**STATUS: FINAL**

**To:** Kristina Cooper

**From:** Mike Foster

**CC:** John Beckett, BARNZ

**Date:** 20 September 2011 (updated 20 October 2011)

**Re: AUCKLAND AIRPORT ALTERNATIVE LAND USE PLAN: INITIAL PLANNING OVERVIEW**

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Further to instructions from BARNZ, I have read the Auckland Airport Alternative Land Use Plan prepared by Common Ground and have a number of initial observations to make, as follows:

- The Plan correctly excludes the commercial / mixed use / bulk storage area as this is already developed and would not directly serve the day to day needs of a 40,000 residential population except in part from an employment perspective.
- The Plan develops a credible and logical approach to the development of a series of residential precincts to cater for up to 40,000 people and I have no issue with the author's assumptions. I agree with the view that *"approximately 70% of the residential product are already widely accepted by todays market"*.
- The idea that the residential area would need a CBD type of facility is less credible. Advice from Market Economics (refer email dated 19 September 2011, Derek Foy) is that a township of 40,000 people would usually support between 95,000 and 155,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial / retail space means that the proposed provision of 500,000m<sup>2</sup> is manifestly in excess of what is likely to be realistically sustainable. Notwithstanding the clarification by Common Ground dated 14 October 2011 of what 'commercial' means, that is, non residential activities excluding offices and retail, I continue to hold serious reservations as to whether between 58 and 74ha is required for such uses. Further the Alternative Land Use Plan and its supporting documentation now needs to be substantially amended to remove the confusion around the meaning of commercial and by association any reference to a CBD type facility.
- I would expect that the core of a town centre for a 40,000 population would realistically be anchored around the existing Countdown / The Warehouse complex which appears to be excluded from the theoretical subdivision of the air side land.
- This means that the so-called CBD core is incorrectly positioned and significantly oversized.
- Further, I consider that the concept of a CBD type of environment on airport land takes no account of the spread of subregional centres within the Auckland region. Manukau "City Centre" is the logical and predominant sub-regional centre in South Auckland. I seriously doubt that Auckland Council would countenance a new major centre to rival the role of Manukau Centre and, by association, undermine its viability / vitality.
- In addition the AIA site is on the edge of the existing South Auckland urban conurbation. As MEL correctly point out, a 500,000m<sup>2</sup> centre would require a *"very large net inflow of retail space and office employment"*, a possibility that would significantly distort the current distribution of activities across the South Auckland area.

- Overall while Common Ground's approach to residential precinct development is realistic and rational its approach to the need for commercial floorspace is grossly overstated and insufficient regard has been given to the employment and commercial service functions that the existing mixed use development area to the north of the airside land (excluded from the valuation area) may have on the commercial space requirements needed to service a population of 40,000 people. Unfortunately the overstatement by Common Ground of commercial floorspace needs by 3 to 5 times casts serious doubt on the balance of their report findings and tends to suggest that the underlying driver behind their report is to maximise the \$ value of the alternative land use scenario. In my view such an approach does not reflect the underlying philosophy of the "Input Methodology Determination" where the emphasis is upon a . . . *"predictable set of alternative uses due to existing and possible zoning and district plan requirements, contour and land area, surrounding land uses, as well as existing linkages and current market supply and demand."*