

NEW ZEALAND

# South Auckland satellite city grabs Government's attention

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A large development is set to take place in Paerata. An expected 30,000 homes could be built on the area, just north of Pukekohe.

Photo / Nick Reed



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A plan to build a new satellite city in South Auckland capable of housing 500,000 people has caught the attention of the Government.

Housing Minister Phil Twyford told the *Herald* today he is very interested in work being done by Infrastructure New Zealand for a satellite city centred round the small settlement of Paerata, just north of Pukekohe.

The rural community is home to Wesley College, where rugby legend Jonah Lomu went to school. The college has set up a joint venture to rezone farmland for a town of 4500 homes.

# It's about what works best for the city, what is affordable, doesn't put extra pressure on your infrastructure and what areas you prioritise

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But in the last few days, Infrastructure New Zealand has released a discussion document identifying Paerata as the best location in Auckland to support a new city of 100,000 residents on cheap, undeveloped land.

Infrastructure New Zealand chief executive Stephen Selwood said the city could eventually extend northwest to Karaka and across the Pahurehure Inlet to Weymouth.

The discussion document said Paerata's proximity to rail and SH1 meant it would only take \$700 million to put in regional roads and water services to build 30,000 homes priced at \$450,000 - nearly half the price of the Auckland median house price of \$825,000.

By 2050, the new city could have tens of thousands of homes serving a population of 500,000 people within 30 minutes of central Auckland, including non-stop rail services and modern trams to the airport, Selwood said.

He said Infrastructure New Zealand looked at locations in Auckland with sufficient land to support a city of 100,000 residents and found the south represents the best opportunity to grow the city affordably and efficiently. Other locations included Dairy Flat-Silverdale, Kumeu and Clevedon.

Selwood said a long-term masterplan of the type proposed for Paerata would be transformational and attract interest from international investors and developers who could build at scale and drive down costs.



Photo / Nick Reed

The Paerata proposal appeals to Twyford, who as Minister of Housing, Transport and Urban Development, is looking for large scale housing developments to address the city's housing crisis and build 50,000 affordable homes in Auckland over the next 10 years.

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Auckland Mayor Phil Goff, who has just returned from a trip to France and London looking at transport and housing issues, had not heard of the Paerata plan.

He said there were already substantial plans for 23,000 new homes in the future urban zone from Paerata through to Drury, but was wary of building outside the urban limits and was keen to protect sensitive environmental areas, like the elite vegetable growing soils at

Pukekohe.

"It's about what works best for the city, what is affordable, doesn't put extra pressure on your infrastructure and what areas you prioritise," Goff said.



Auckland Mayor Phil Goff. Photo / Dean Purcell

Transport issues in South Auckland will come up as part of a "New Deal for Auckland" that gets underway this week when Goff meets Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Finance Minister Grant Robertson and Twyford in Wellington for the first time.

Twyford said one of the first steps will be to sit down with Auckland Council and renegotiate the joint Government-council transport plan, known as the Auckland Transport Alignment Project.

One issue the parties will make a call on is a new \$955 million Mill Rd highway from SH1 at Manukau south to Drury, promoted by the previous National Government to support growth in South Auckland.

Twyford said there was no doubt the Southern Motorway was heavily congested and a disaster for the people of South Auckland, saying he had asked official for a business case on Mill Rd.



Photo / Nick Reed

He said the Government was proceeding with several public transport projects in South Auckland, including a third rail line from Otahuhu to Wiri, electrifying rail from Papakura to Pukekohe and providing rapid buses from Puhinui to the airport.

"We are impatient for progress and I think Aucklanders are too. We are asking people to shell out a few extra dollars at the fuel pump (from a regional petrol tax) and people rightly want to see action," Twyford said.

Goff said he had a good working relationship with the National Government but he expected things to ramp up with the Labour-led Government.

He has welcomed the prospect of a regional fuel tax for Auckland, likely to be 10 cents a litre, to pay for transport infrastructure. The former Labour MP also supports Labour and the Greens' plans for light rail to the airport and West Auckland from the CBD.

### Why Paerata?

- Close to industrial land at Drury
- Close to employment centres at Manukau and Auckland Airport
- Close to Waikato and Bay of Plenty growth areas
- Water, power and aggregate supplies comes from the south
- Located on a rail line
- Tens of thousands of homes within 30 minutes of downtown Auckland

- Houses could be built for \$450,000
- Cheaper than other options at Dairy-Flat-Silverdale, Kumeu

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