

An introduction to

Sustainable Communities

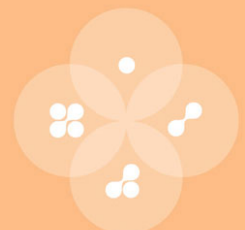
A workstrand within the Auckland
Sustainable Cities Programme

Prepared: October 2005



AUCKLAND SUSTAINABLE CITIES PROGRAMME

A regional partnership with the Sustainable Development Programme of Action



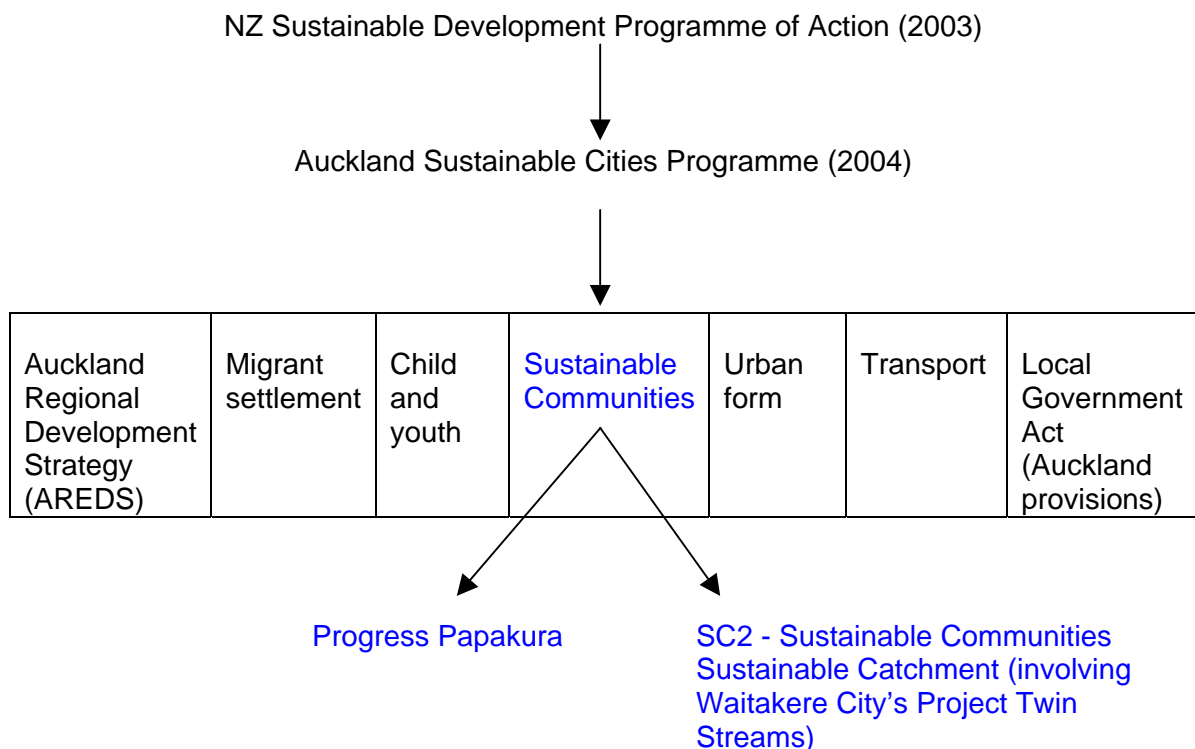
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

1.0 Introduction

“Sustainable Communities” is one of the six workstrands of the Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme, which is a joint central and local government initiative.

2.0 Context

The Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme (ASCP) emerged from the NZ Sustainable Development Programme of Action (2003). The diagram below shows the wider context behind Sustainable Communities.



The Sustainable Communities vision and objectives are primarily being delivered through its two demonstration projects: Progress Papakura and Waitakere City's Project Twin Streams.

3.0 Sustainable Communities vision and objectives

Sustainable Communities describes a sustainable community as one which:

- **Maintains carrying capacities.**
Its existence & development are based on recognising & maintaining carrying capacities the community relies on regarding (a) natural resources and ecosystem services (b) shared values (c) human & social capital (d) built capital.
- **Considers future generations.**
Priorities regarding community wellbeing take account of the needs of the future generational equity and fairness issues.

- **Retains diversity.**
Its existence and development recognises and retains diversity, in economic, social and biological terms.
- **Recognises holistic interrelationships.**
The interconnections and interdependencies between economic, social, and natural sectors / systems are recognised and managed for balanced development.
- **Considers wider links.**
The interdependence with other communities and the wider society are acknowledged and maintained (not development at expense of others)
- **Is community-owned.**
The development is participatory, community-driven and owned.

‘Community’ here includes the environment in which people live (people and place). Sustainable development is understood as an integrated set of practices by individuals, families and communities to enhance environmental, economic, and socio-cultural wellbeing now and in the future.

The Sustainable Communities workstrand aims to build mutually sustaining partnerships between local communities, local, regional and central government, to pursue a holistic, sustainable development approach to addressing present needs and choosing the kind of future local people want.

Sustainable Communities involves three layers of objectives:

1. Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme objectives.
2. Sustainable Communities workstrand objectives.
3. Demonstration project objectives.

The Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme has four high level objectives:

1. Make sustainable development happen by translating theory into practice.
2. Increased community capacity and buy-in to sustainable practice.
3. Strengthen central and local government collaboration and partnerships.
4. Demonstrate contribution to sustainable outcomes.

Guided by these objectives, the Sustainable Communities vision is:

“To achieve strong, liveable and prosperous communities in Auckland through a sustainable development approach”.

The workstrand has four objectives sitting under this vision:

1. A shared perspective across each community about basic concepts of sustainable development and sustainable communities.
2. Informed and connected communities leading their own sustainable development in partnership with central government agencies and other stakeholders.
3. Implementation of practical sustainable development initiatives in each demonstration project that contribute to community wellbeing outcomes.
4. Increased central and local government effectiveness in coordinating strategies, services, resources around community outcomes through a collaborative, learning approach.

All of the objectives above are closely related. The means for delivering on these objectives is through workstrand level activity and the two demonstration projects, as described below.

At the workstrand level we recognise that there are things that enable communities to act more sustainably. Part of the Sustainable Communities workstrand involves resourcing these “enablers” to support local sustainable community development including:

- Access to information and research.
- Strong social capital, especially social networks and civic participation.
- Developing shared community identity, values and vision.
- Skilled leaders and capable organisations.
- Accessing necessary resources.
- Brokering relationships and partnerships (see Figure 1).

4.0 How Sustainable Communities objectives are being pursued

Overall, Sustainable Communities is facilitated by a working group made up of representatives from the two agencies who co-lead the project: the Department of Internal Affairs and the Auckland Regional Council. This group meets regularly to guide the project and reflect on key lessons as time goes on. The workstrand is supported by a project manager who is based in the Department of Internal Affairs, and has an annual project plan which focuses on meeting reporting commitments, evaluation and supporting the demonstration projects.

As with the other workstrands in the Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme, the Sustainable Communities workstrand is primarily being delivered via demonstration projects. Sustainable Communities supports two demonstration projects: Progress Papakura and SC² (Sustainable Communities Sustainable Catchment), which involves Waitakere City Council’s Project Twin Streams. Both projects are very different in purpose, scope and context, as described below.

4.1 Progress Papakura

Progress Papakura is exploring how central, regional and local government collaboration can support community involvement in developing sustainable outcomes in Papakura. The vehicle for doing this is the Community Outcomes Planning process, which will result in the development of a ‘Community Plan’ for Papakura.

All local authorities are required by the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 to undertake this kind of planning; in Progress Papakura though, there is a strong focus on the potential for local communities to develop their own sustainable development outcomes and action through the Community Plan, with support from local, regional and central government working in collaboration. It aims to reflect a three-way partnership between central government, regional/local government and local communities, to further local sustainability through local government statutory processes.

Progress Papakura is driven by a strategic “workstream group”, made up of representatives from the Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Social Development, Counties-Manukau District Health Board, Papakura District Council and the Auckland Regional Council. Other agencies such as Te Puni Kokiri and the Ministry of Youth Development are involved in supporting initiatives and strategy areas. It is hoped that there will be

community representation on these groups in the near future, but the agencies have agreed not to impose a set structure on the community, but rather allow that to be determined by the community. The project began in September 2004 and is funded by Sustainable Communities with \$65,000 annually to July 2007.

4.2 SC² – Sustainable Communities Sustainable Catchment (Project Twin Streams)

Waitakere City Council's Project Twin Streams is a multi-faceted project aiming to achieve long term sustainable management of the Swanson catchment draining to the Huruhuru creek and the Oratia/Opanuku catchment draining to the Henderson creek, through a sustainable community development approach. It weaves together integrated stormwater management, the restoration of 125 km of stream banks, and new cycle and walkways, with the use of community contracts with local community based organisations to engage local people to further local sustainable development.

At the heart of Project Twin Streams is the relationship between people and the environment. The project recognises that it is not possible to restore natural waterways without working with the people and communities who are part of the local catchment. This means looking beyond stream restoration to a sustainable community development approach that promotes the interconnectedness of economic, social, cultural, spiritual and environmental aspects of life. Project Twin Streams is ultimately working towards a community governance model for the restoration of local streams, and towards local people leading planning and actions toward the sustainable development of their local area.

Sustainable Communities is particularly supporting a sustainable community development approach in those communities (localities) that have made or are making a commitment to developing Project Twin Streams. This has included supporting the development of new and creative ways of connecting people with their environment, the development of a rangatahi "at risk" programme focussed on connections with the environment and looking at iwi and Maori economic development opportunities.

SC² is driven by a working group which includes representatives from Project Twin Streams, the Department of Internal Affairs and the Auckland Regional Council. In turn this group works with other community agencies, iwi representatives, Te Puni Kokiri and other parts of Waitakere City Council to progress the project. SC² began in November 2004 and is funded by Sustainable Communities with \$65,000 annually to July 2007.

5.0 Evaluation

The Sustainable Communities workstrand will be evaluated following the end of each financial year at workstrand and project levels. The evaluation aims to:

- Capture what occurred during the life of the workstrand (in terms of processes, actions and impacts).
- Capture participant perceptions regarding what occurred.
- Establish whether workstrand objectives were met and if not, why not.
- Make clear how the workstrand is reflecting sustainability principles.
- Establish key indicators and baseline information to monitor over time.
- Identify what was most effective in achieving goals, and barriers to progress.

- Capture key commonalities and differences between the two demonstration projects.
- Show how the demonstration projects are contributing to the Sustainable Communities workstrand objectives.
- Show how the workstrand is contributing to Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme objectives.

6.0 Sustainable Communities working group contacts

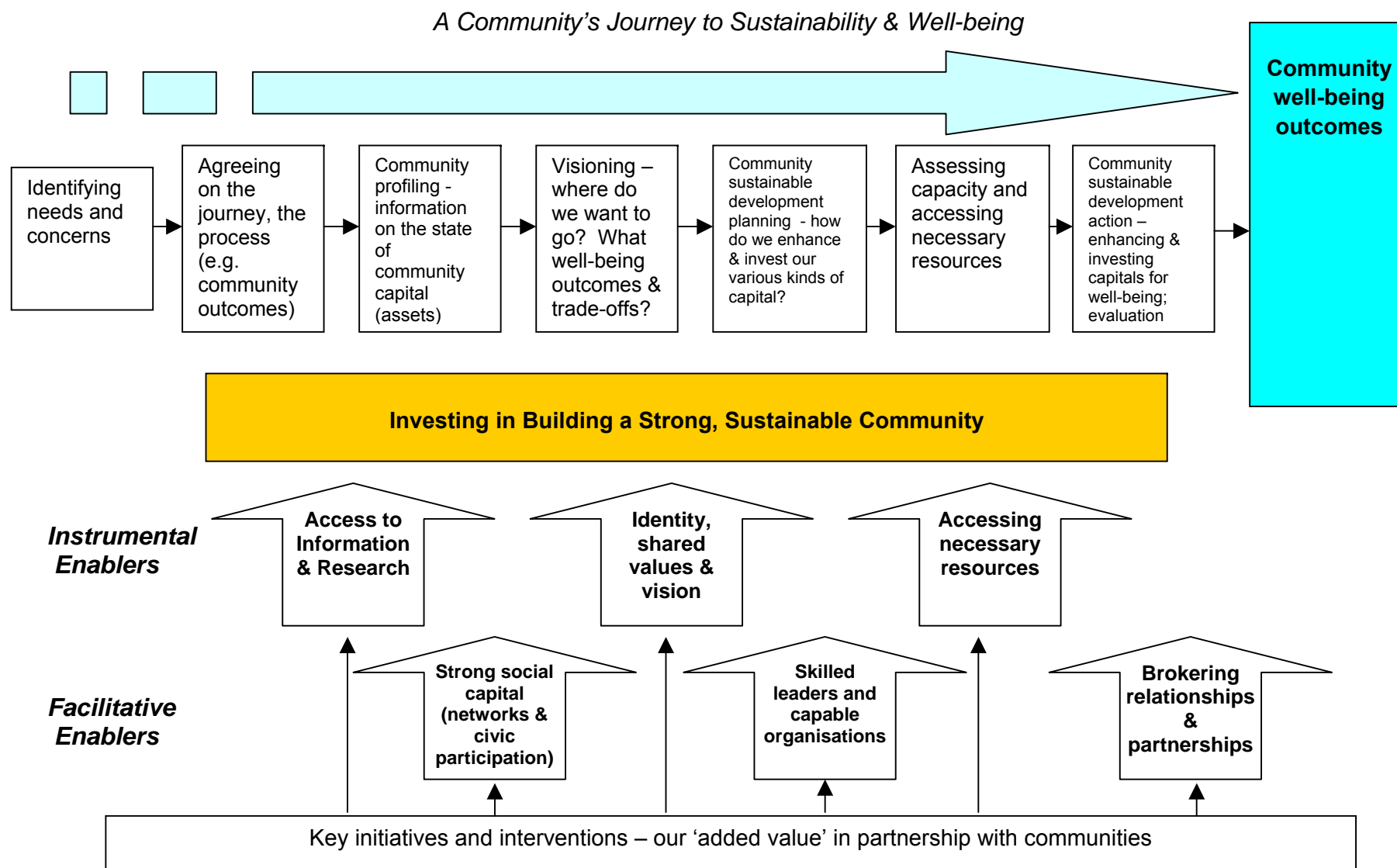
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Figure 1: INVESTMENT APPROACH TO BUILDING STRONG, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
 (from *A Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities, 2002*)



Location of Sustainable Communities' two demonstration projects within the Auckland region

Project Twin Streams

Papakura district

