

NEWS

December 2006

1	<p>High-rise homes to beat big tides (New Zealand Herald Northern Advocate) Development company Landco states that homes to be built on its Ngunguru sandspit will have to be raised about 4.65 m above sea level to take into account global warming over the next 100 years. Plans are for a 350 section village covering 36 ha comprising about quarter of the total land another 85 ha would be a reserve. The size of the scheme has angered development opponents. Note: almost 2 years after the tsunami disaster in Indonesia, Civic Trust Auckland is amazed that there are still no controls put in place by local authorities over coastal developments.</p>
2	<p>Shore thing (New Zealand listener Bruce Ansley) This excellent four-page article deals with the way in which Kiwis living near the beach need to allow for rising sea levels. Note: neither Government, nor Local Authorities appear to have fully come to grips with possible future rising sea levels or tsunami risk.</p>
5	<p>Goff demands more time on Whenuapai (New Zealand Herald Wayne Thompson) Defence Minister Phil Goff has again deferred any decision on the future of the airbase until nearer the time of transfer to Ohakea, expected about 2014. Waitakere Mayor Bob Harvey has been pushing for it to become a commercial airport. A consortium comprising Waitakere city, infrastructure investment company Infratill, North Shore city and Rodney district Council decided in October to band together to form a company to develop the airport. This seems somewhat premature, in view of continued government deferment of necessary decisions.</p>
6	<p>Eden Park-moving the goalposts (East and Bays Courier Pat Booth) A number of confusing myths are unmasked in this article. It transpires for example that the Eden Park trust board was not actively involved in the successful Dublin bid. That bid involved a committee comprising the rugby union and government. It was that committee which promised a stadium of 60,000 in order to comply with late conditions imposed by the IRB. Pat Booth asks "why should the region and its ratepayers foot the bill for something they didn't negotiate for, which was agreed to by the government and the rugby union and which the public were never asked about" ?</p>
6	<p>Democracy at risk (East and Bays Courier Justine Glucina) The mission Bay Kohimarama residents Association is up in arms over the waterfront stadium fiasco and the way in which the decision making process appeared to sideline normal democratic planning principles.</p>
6	<p>Resistance to station's grandiose upgrade (New Zealand Herald Matthew Dearnaley) There is resistance from Auckland regional Council to plans for a new \$70 million plus station at Newmarket, described by the council as grandiose. The Auckland regional transport authority wants \$31.4 million from the council for swept up station superstructure. Auckland regional Council supports a two station alternative, with the existing station serving the southern line and a new station at Kingdon Street to serve the Western line.</p>
6	<p>\$26 million plan to sidestep traffic chaos (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman) Eden Park transport consultant Graeme Stevenson says that one of the keys to the Eden Park upgrade is provision of a \$26 million pedestrian concourse to and from the nearby rail station.</p>
8	<p>Ports of Auckland loses ownership of tank farm site (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman) This misleading headline suggests that ownership has been lost. The article however clearly shows that the present owner, Auckland Regional Council, is merely setting up a special company to manage the tank farm development.</p>
8	<p>Auckland War memorial museum opens (East and Bays Courier Nicholas Moody) It has taken 12 years and \$113 million to complete this controversial project, which has added considerably to exhibition and general accommodation within the museum. Note: see also New Zealand Herald, December 9, James Ihaka.</p>
9	<p>Vaka moana voyages of the ancestors (New Zealand Herald) This major exhibition, showing exploration of the Pacific as far as New Zealand, is on view in the museum from December 9 to April 8, 2007.</p>
9	<p>Rich 2% own half of world's wealth (New Zealand Herald Reuters) The spread of wealth is more uneven than the spread of income. The bottom half of the world's population own 1% of the world's assets.</p>
9	<p>Stadium ad nauseam (New Zealand listener Jon Bridges) A slightly tongue in cheek article compares the desire for a new stadium in Auckland with the desire for a new stadium in Rome at the time of the Coliseum. Apparently in Roman times walkways allowing access to and egress from seating were called vomitoria, an architectural term no longer considered fashionable. Note: the writer seems to compare the Coliseum with the recently proposed Auckland waterfront stadium, on the grounds that the Coliseum was central and</p>

	built on what used to be a lake. Actually, both these descriptions apply best to Eden Park.
10	Flashing zebras an Auckland first (City scene) Royal Oak roundabout gets flashing light studs, under a technology trial by Land Transport New Zealand, in conjunction with similar trials being made in Christchurch city.
10	Panmure railway station opens December 10 (City scene)
10	Westhaven Marina has received an international blue flag award (City scene) This award recognizes the marina's sustainable efforts in water quality, environmental education, management, safety and other services. Note: marinas have, in the past, been considered major pollution centres and, notwithstanding this award there are still pollution concerns over all waterfront activities, involving marinas and ports.
11	Newmarket station upgrade (New Zealand Herald Matthew Dearnaley) The Newmarket station upgrade is controversial, due to the unusual nature of the intersection, therefore the complex design necessary for any new station canopy and, most controversial of all, what to do with the existing older station built in 1908 (in the so-called Troup era). The Auckland Regional Council has been asked by its transport authority for \$31.4 million to cover the cost of a remodelled station and place the existing station on an elevated concourse. The future purpose of the old station is unclear and it would lose its historic chimney. An alternative is proposed by Bob MacIntyre, who is offering to move the station for free to a site adjoining the railway line at Ellerslie. Note: many older stations of heritage value within the Auckland region are at risk. Civic Trust Auckland prefers to see heritage buildings retained on their original sites, but where overwhelming economic and design considerations make this impossible, alternative proposals such as this one by Bob McIntyre for New market, should be given due consideration.
11	Cows, not cars, top threat to the environment (New Zealand Herald independent/Jarrold Booker) In a United Nations report, cows are blamed for a host of environmental crimes. Note: the situation in New Zealand needs to be looked at carefully, as dairy farming has increased enormously throughout New Zealand in recent decades.
12	Eden Park upgrade (New Zealand Herald Wayne Thompson) This article presents some of the Eden Park trust board's financial data, in support of its upgrade plans, such as \$507 million added to the New Zealand economy, \$262 million spent on Auckland and \$240 million spent regionally (challenged by Auckland City Council economic advisers). At present Eden Park contributes about \$32 million a year to regional GDP from 16 to 20 matches. Note: these figures would appear to make financial on nonsense of the prior proposal to build a new stadium on the waterfront (costing at least \$500 million, but reliably suggested as likely to cost \$1 billion plus).
13	Billboards face the boot (New Zealand Herald Bernard Orsman, Claire Trevett) This is the first notification that Auckland City Council is proposing a comprehensive Billboard ban.
13	Forest replanting promised (New Zealand Herald Pam Graham) Carter Holt Harvey's forests will be replanted when harvested. Note: Consider the ownership of carbon credits in New Zealand and watch this space.
14	Eden Park upgrade (New Zealand Herald Matthew Dearnaley) The government is taking longer than planned to assess the Eden Park upgrade. It has called in a London based Stadium expert. Trust board plans costing either \$320 million or \$385 million are being considered. Temporary facilities for 12,000 people are also being considered.
14	Kaipara Harbour proposed underwater turbines (New Zealand Herald James Ihaka) More detail on the design of proposed turbines and their location adjoining Poto Point are given.
14	Blinkered view of cityscape (New Zealand Herald editorial) A reasonably well balanced article submits that "only in rare circumstances can a ban on billboards be justified. Auckland, with its unexceptional buildings and cityscape, is not one of these". The Billboard issue is one of those areas of civic design where both sides are possibly correct in their opposing attitudes. Note: This issue of the Herald provided a number of readers' responses, both for and against, indicating that the issue is much more complex than appears on the surface. Another article in the same paper compared the current situation in Auckland, where there are already restrictions, with the situation in overseas cities. A further article by Brian Rudman on the subject gave the case against- "it's hard to imagine a more effective and instant way of improving the visual environment of central Auckland than this proposed bylaw banning billboards from much of the CBD and surrounding commercial areas"
14	Pigeon lovers take on London mayor in Battle of Trafalgar (New Zealand Herald Reuters) London mayor Ken Livingstone calls pigeons "flying rats, a nuisance and health hazard". In a six year ongoing effort at eradication, the sale of bird seed has been banned and hawks have been introduced. Note: Although this somewhat amusing story from far away may seem of little relevance, there are many parks, reserves and localities around Auckland where bird numbers are sufficiently high as to cause a nuisance and health risk. Western Springs, the duck pond in the Domain and wetland areas such as St Michael's reserve come to mind.
15	Billboard plan approved, subject to public discussion (New Zealand Herald Wayne Thompson) Following submissions from advertising and Billboard industries which state that \$70 million in revenue and up to 150 jobs are at risk Auckland City Council has approved plans to ban billboards from the city, Newmarket, Ponsonby and

	Parnell, subject to consultations in the new year from January 15.
15	<p>Mt Eden Stadium debate (New Zealand Herald Martha McKenzie-Minifie, also Rudman's city)</p> <p>Two separate articles voice concern over the proposed Mt Eden upgrade. The first article deals with neighbourhood objectors, while in the second, Brian Rudman submits an amusing tongue in cheek alternative, namely that of hiring a Zhenhua class ship of the type which has recently berthed here, with three large cranes on board, converted as a floating Stadium and therefore available, once used, for rehire elsewhere. Strangely the concept is not entirely absurd. The cranes, incidentally were made in Shanghai, costing \$9 million, weighing 1250 tonnes and are 73 m high (each), as described in a Herald article by James Ihaka yesterday.</p>
15	<p>Panmure's new \$2.4 million railway station opens (East and Bay's Courier Nicholas Moody)</p> <p>Scheduled for completion in March 2005, the station finally opened last Sunday. By Monday morning it had been covered in graffiti.</p>
16	<p>Motor powered by sewerage pond goes like stink (New Zealand Herald Mike Houlahan)</p> <p>A car running on a 5% blend of bio fuel made by algae grown on human sewage is claimed to have made its world debut. The bio diesel has been developed by Marlborough firm Aquaflo. Note: bio fuel is well advanced overseas, particularly in the USA and Brazil, also increasingly in China.</p>
16	<p>Historic mansion demolished to make way for apartments (New Zealand Herald Anne Beston and David Eames)</p> <p>Coolangatta homestead has been demolished. Designed by architect Noel Bamford in traditional Arts and Crafts style, it was built in 1916 with six bedrooms a formal dining room and four living areas.</p>
18	<p>Final strands of spaghetti Junction open today (New Zealand Herald Matthew Dearnaley)</p> <p>Today it will be possible, following a \$207.5 million refit of the Junction, for traffic to pass from the Western motorway and from the port directly on to the northern motorway. Traffic flows in the opposite direction opened a fortnight ago. A catch is that a traffic management technique involving ramp signals will control the flow of vehicles. Note: ramp signals have been used for some time at Mangere Bridge on ramp. The system was adopted with total lack of success on the southbound Esmonde road on ramp many years ago. The adoption of such a costly system, so prone to failure has been a mystery.</p>
18	<p>May the new plan to save Mt Eden work better than the last (New Zealand Herald Rudman's city)</p> <p>This article notes that 20 years after an original comprehensive management plan for the mountain was created a new draft plan has been endorsed. Why the one eyed concentration on this single show pony? There are 50 volcanic land forms in the Auckland field which together make up Auckland's unique volcanic landscape. It is the total landscape which the Department of Conservation, from time to time, promises to put up for world heritage site listing. Note: Civic Trust Auckland sees the draft plan as little different from the old, which was highly comprehensive, with few obvious faults. It was merely largely ignored.</p>
18	<p>Wrecking ball leaves bad smell-Coolangatta and demolished (New Zealand Herald editorial)</p> <p>This editorial criticises Auckland City Council in its decision, not only to allow demolition of one of Remuera's most attractive heritage homesteads, but also the secrecy by which Council wished to cloak that decision. This building was located at 464 Remuera Rd. In another article in the same paper, Claire Trevett lists those who voted for and against protection of the property and those who voted for and against making the first vote public. Note: this issue again brings to the fore the fact that many buildings of heritage value are located on valuable development sites.</p>
19	<p>Developer has another plan for historic Parnell house (New Zealand Herald Anne Beston)</p> <p>Development Company SMG bought the Paykel home at 42 St Stephens Ave and proposed to demolish the 96 year old house and replace it with four buildings containing 13 luxury apartments. Last year Otto properties bought the site after the Auckland City Council scheduled it as a category B heritage building. This level of protection still allows demolition or removal, but not without resource consent. The current proposal is to add apartments within the grounds, retaining the existing house. Note: this issue again brings to the fore the fact that many buildings of heritage value are located on valuable development sites.</p>
19	<p>Forestry charge plan likely to set chainsaws going (New Zealand Herald Brian Fallow)</p> <p>Proposals by Government to impose a deforestation liability, will intensify the incentive forest owners already have to get rid of trees, before the new regime comes into effect. This is one of two articles in the same paper by this author, who notes in his second article that forest owners are incensed over proposed charges. In an associated editorial, it was urged that a carrot, rather than a stick would be best to cure a looming disaster of forestry liabilities amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars, under the Kyoto protocol. Statistics quoted include the fact that an estimated 7000 ha of forest fell last year would not be replanted comprising 18% of the area harvested. Only 6000 ha of forest were planted last year. Note: political bumbling and incompetence, which is leading to the ruin of New Zealand's forest industry, is best summarised in the recent book <i>The great wood robbery</i> by Hamish Levack, Lindsay Poole and Julian Bateson, published by Bateson publishing Ltd.</p>
20	<p>Yet more evidence that city fathers live in parallel universe (New Zealand Herald Rudman's city)</p> <p>Another hard-hitting article lambastes Auckland city functionaries for their inequitable decisions on heritage matters in recent times. There is also criticism of the pathetically small \$50,000 per year offered to the private sector for upgrading heritage buildings. The writer notes that it is quite remarkable that no homes exist along the Remuera Ridge which are considered to be of heritage value.</p>
20	<p>Sunken rail line to save New Lynn</p>

	<p>(New Zealand Herald Matthew Dearnaley) A government decision has been made to spend \$120 million in upgrading the station and sinking a double track railway line through the heart of New Lynn. Added to that will be a further \$55 million from Waitakere City Council and possible private-sector contributions in exchange for air rights above the rail line.</p>
20	<p>Mega-Auckland (New Zealand Herald Wayne Thompson) In another article over the most recent campaign to reform governance within greater Auckland this article reflects the hand wringing and confusion of local mayors in their attempts to come to some agreement over the powers of the Auckland regional Council, who should own and control Watercare Services and how in general costs can be cut.</p>
20	<p>Carter must resign over marina mess (New Zealand Herald editorial) This editorial calls for the resignation of conservation Minister Chris Carter, for "arbitrarily subverting the judicial process in a manner that mocked its very existence". The editorial follows from the controversial veto by Chris Carter of a proposed marina at Whangamata, subsequently overturned by the High Court.</p>
22	<p>Orakei finally gets its new 180 boat marina (New Zealand Herald Maggie McNaughton) This \$30 million marina opened yesterday decades after it was first proposed. The births range in price from \$100000-\$750000. All but two have been sold.</p>
22	<p>Historic house may be moved to escape wrecker's ball (New Zealand Herald Anne Beston) One of the last weatherboard villas at 123 Grafton Road is likely to be moved by its owner, Housing New Zealand, rather than demolished. It sits on a valuable development site and has recently missed, by a narrow margin achievement of category B heritage status.</p>
26	<p>Zero carbon eco friendly house still just a lot of hot air (New Zealand Herald Amy Iggulden, London) Bedzed, an award-winning development of 99 apartments in south London was supposed to be a zero carbon sustainable complex, but has failed so far, mainly due to a failure of the revolutionary wood-burning heat and power technology adopted. Note: this complex could be as important for urban designers in terms of what not to do, as it is important in terms of the positive aspects of the design concept and existing technologies, which go some way towards a possible sustainable future,</p>
27	<p>Only tolls can ration road use (New Zealand Herald editorial) This editorial puts the case for adopting tolls generally and in particular urges early completion as a toll road of the proposed Albany/airport western Link via Avondale. Note: Civic Trust Auckland questions the idea of rationing road use, based upon the ability of the user to pay. Road tolls applied in some places, but not others, could distort local economies and goes against the concept of equitable fairness to all.</p>
30	<p>Debt mountain shadows year ahead (New Zealand Herald Brian Gaynor) in a comment upon the economy this article notes that the too much debt and not enough exports. This is not surprising as the same comment could have applied virtually any year during the last several decades. The debt Mountain does appear quite serious amounting to \$36,000 for every man woman and child in the country, compared with \$25,000 as recently as three years ago.</p>
30	<p>Government plans new way to tax car drivers (New Zealand Herald Paula Oliver) Fears of a drop in petrol tax income trigger a move to impose road user charges on all vehicles. Note: the concept of applying a fixed charge per kilometre travelled seems to make little sense. It does not distinguish between single occupier and multi-occupier vehicles and does not distinguish between small efficient cars and large inefficient gas guzzlers. Indeed there is a case for scrapping road user charges entirely and replacing them with some form of subsidy for the few farm vehicles which are not using the roading system. Fuel taxes are the best way in which economies in transport usage can be encouraged. It is not even true that the use by any particular vehicle of any kilometre of road necessarily means that such a road should be extended. Any tax collected will surely be spent elsewhere, probably with no benefit to any particular taxpayer. A final point is that fixed road user charges do not reflect wear and tear on roads and therefore the need for road maintenance. Damage to roads increases exponentially with vehicle weight and is also affected by vehicle speed and a number of other factors.</p>