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Simply A Numbers Game?
Smart Growth Implementation and the Determination of Open Space
Requirements in New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This research is concerned with the New Zealand implementation of the USA-developed growth management tool known as Smart Growth, specifically in relation to the provision of open space at the local authority and community level. It uses Tauranga as a case-study as it is the first New Zealand city to seriously attempt to institute an urban growth strategy based on Smart Growth principles. This research examines current issues with respect to reserve provision in New Zealand where Smart Growth is implemented, and considers the possibility of alternative approaches to what is being currently used and proposed in the future that may be closer aligned to the demographic characteristics of intensified communities and the goals of Smart Growth.

Sources from the United States provide a limitless range of material advocating Smart Growth and its desired outcomes. There is little information in terms of the implementation of it, particularly in terms of specific aspects such as open space provision. The discussion draws upon both overseas and New Zealand literature to provide an origin for current approaches to open space provision. It becomes clear that the models used by many territorial authorities in New Zealand are based on demographic and community characteristics that hold little relevance in the twenty-first century.

It is thought that an alternative approach may also go some way towards providing territorial authorities such as Tauranga City Council (TCC) with a policy tool for providing open space that may be founded to a lesser extent on quantitative measures. Further it may provide guidance for other local authorities that are contemplating or are using urban growth management such as Smart Growth or any such approach that involves residential intensification. It is further hoped that this research will draw other useful conclusions regarding the general approach to reserve provision across New Zealand.

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