THEMES

Several inter-linking themes underpin the Framework’s vision – Wellington’s northern suburbs will continue to develop as an integrated, liveable, diverse, sustainable and prosperous community.

These themes provide coherence and guidance for further work and implementation. The themes are supported by values and principles. All are based on the premise of building on existing communities, which is the key growth strategy.

- **Liveability** – supporting existing communities and ensuring a quality urban form for a quality lifestyle
- **Sustainability** – managing growth in a sustainable way and responding to our environment
- **Accessibility** – making it easy to access services and amenities – for work, pleasure, support
- **Connectivity** – integrating the movement network and enhancing linkages within and between communities and to the city and region
- **Prosperity** – providing a climate for commercial enterprises and local businesses to thrive.

VALUES

**RECOGNISE THE NORTHERN AREA AS INTEGRAL TO THE GROWTH OF WELLINGTON CITY AND MANAGE THIS GROWTH IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY**

Underpins the themes of sustainability, liveability and connectivity.

Our aim is to manage urban growth to ensure the city’s development is sustainable. That means managing urban expansion and urban form to reduce the costs on the community and the environment. This can be achieved by making sure that any expansion of urban areas supports existing centres and makes efficient use of infrastructure, while building up the Outer Green Belt and other open space areas to set clear distinctions between urban, rural and natural zones. We need to offer a range of housing opportunities – low, medium and high density – to provide clear, attractive lifestyle choices.

Working together with communities and landowners to manage future growth gives the city the opportunity to balance its economic and social development, and its impact on the natural environment, for the benefit of the whole city, now and in the future.

Underlying principles

- The northern area will be the primary location for ‘greenfields’ residential development in Wellington.
- The economic, social and environmental costs of urban development will be reduced.
- The links with the city and wider region will be acknowledged and built upon.
The northern suburbs area will be characterised as largely residential, with a mixture of low, medium and high density housing.

Density should be higher near transport nodes.

Residential development should build on and strengthen existing communities in the northern area.

There will be a strong distinction between urban and natural environments.

Residential development should follow an integrated urban planning approach to subdivision and neighbourhood design that recognises landform and other natural features.

Infrastructure will be used efficiently and sensibly and will be provided at an early stage of subdivision development.

**DEVELOP A HIGHLY LIVEABLE AND ATTRACTIVE URBAN ENVIRONMENT FOR COMMUNITIES**

*Underpins themes of liveability, accessibility and connectivity.*

Supporting existing communities is central to northern growth. We have chosen to focus on strengthening the town centres that exist, rather than developing new ones. That means creating better connections between centres and improving the facilities and services available in ways that reinforce the unique identity of each place.

The patterns of residential development in the northern area have created a number of isolated communities, where the access to jobs and services is currently less than ideal. This has led to increased car use (which loads the roading systems and has negative environmental impacts). It can also reduce the residents’ sense of community and affect pride in their immediate environment.

The Framework promotes the development of attractive, diverse, liveable neighbourhoods that offer local housing choices, promote walkability to community and convenience services, and allow for intensification over time. This approach can improve the viability of each centre, and will provide people with confidence in the future of their neighbourhood and community.

**Underlying principles**

- Residential development should be sufficiently diverse to meet the needs of a range of people.
- The links between home, jobs and services will be improved.
- Residential development must achieve high standards of privacy, security and visual character, and provide attractive and accessible public open space.
- The connections between local communities and with the city will be enhanced.
- Access to opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the natural environment will be developed and enhanced.
- Community values and needs will be recognised and supported in developing a sense of local community.
- Quality amenities that support a healthy and diverse community will be encouraged.
• A range of accessible suburban centres of varying sizes (according to their function) that have a strong sense of identity will be promoted.
• A range of employment, residential and community uses will be provided.
• Attractive public open spaces will be planned within neighbourhoods and tree planting within the street network will be extended.
• A simple, well-connected street network will be developed that supports a range of activities and avoids long winding cul de sacs as far as possible.
• Traffic planning must balance transport efficiency with streetscape quality, pedestrian safety and comfort.
• Choices in housing, employment, access and transport will be enhanced and promoted.

The Framework respects the unique environment of Wellington City, including its ridges, streams and forests. It is based on the Council’s existing ‘compact city’ approach, which recognises the underlying form of the city as the primary shaping force of the urban area.

It establishes clear distinctions between built, natural and rural areas using major green belts, including the Outer Green Belt, to set the boundaries for growth. At the same time it recognises the importance of the natural systems within the built environment by seeking to retain internal green corridors thereby protecting bush remnants, stream systems, soils and landforms. This integration of natural and urban systems allows the city to develop in a way that supports the recovery and preservation of its ecology, as well as providing diverse recreation opportunities. Many of the natural linkages can provide space for an integrated track network for walking and other forms of recreation.

We place importance on stream protection, for the maintenance of water quality, stream ecology and flood management. The Framework includes guidelines for the siting and style of new developments that respect water, soil and vegetation, maintain soil permeability and reduce runoff.

Underlying principles
• Native bush will be protected and extended where possible and private native planting will be encouraged.
• Significant hilltops and ridgelines will be left intact.
• The Outer Green Belt will be preserved and extended where possible.
• Development will not be permitted to impinge on important natural features.
• Buffer zones and green linkages between natural habitats will be provided where ecologically and recreationally beneficial.
• The Council will acquire land of significant ecological value to create green and blue corridors.
• Streams and wetlands will be protected and extended.
• Pollution prevention will be a major consideration.
• The right infrastructure will be provided to maintain and improve water quality and stream care.

ENCOURAGE A THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY
Underpins themes of prosperity and liveability.

The health of the local economy has a direct impact on the mood, character and shape of a community. The Framework emphasises the importance of local centres for liveability; easily accessible and thriving centres are also important for prosperity. Several communities in the area suffer from a lack of, or inadequate, suburban centres. Providing people with local choices for shopping, work and services can also help to reduce transport and other costs. By providing an environment where, first, locals can support local businesses and, second, money enters the district from outside, we can foster economic growth.

Wellington needs to explore new locations and innovative choices for larger scale commercial developments. The northern area’s proximity to main trunk routes makes it a good possible location. The implementation plans explore opportunities to secure greenfield commercial growth. The northern area has the potential to support and strengthen economic growth both for the city and the region.

Underlying principles
• Development initiatives aimed at providing jobs for residents will be encouraged but are not a primary focus.
• Business premises development will be allowed where it promotes more intensive and mixed use near neighbourhood and transport nodes.
• Commercial development will be encouraged if it supports and services a variety of small business employment uses.
• Innovative and creative approaches to economic growth should be considered.
• Balance between residential, employment and recreational activities is important.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE HERITAGE AND CULTURE OF THE AREA
Underpins the themes of liveability and accessibility.

The northern area covers a wide geographical area and incorporates a number of diverse communities. Each community has its own identity, character and history. The Framework aims to build on the individuality of these existing communities and to highlight and protect where possible particular elements of historical and cultural relevance. The community, and Maori representatives, will play an important part in ensuring heritage is preserved.
Underlying principles

- Heritage and culture are important elements of the fabric of the northern suburbs.
- Existing sites of heritage and cultural significance should be protected, subject to any limitations imposed by the modified environment they occupy.
- Local identity, character and history will be recognised and emphasised.
- Opportunities to highlight and/or enhance the area’s heritage should be maximised.
- Maori history and heritage will be recognised in consultation with local iwi.

**ENSURE INFRASTRUCTURE MEETS THE AREA’S NEEDS**

Underpins the themes of liveability, sustainability and connectivity.

Appropriate infrastructure is crucial for any growth strategy. Adequate water supply; efficient drainage, sewerage systems and solid waste disposal; good pollution and flood control; and effective roading and transport networks all need to be provided and maintained.

In this Framework we are focusing on responding to our environment and this shapes the way we approach the provision of infrastructure. Guidelines will ensure that natural waterways are not polluted or unnecessarily modified and that stormwater systems are not overloaded. Well planned placement of water reservoirs will assist in providing an adequate water supply.

Improving the connections between road, cycle, pedestrian and passenger transport systems is central to this Framework. The aim is to give all residents access to a variety of modes of transport that will improve their access to jobs and services, while reducing environmental costs.

This involves building on the advantages provided by the existing major motorway and rail lines that service the area. Improvements to roading systems will help create more links between the different communities, to overcome the isolation that has resulted from the recent pattern of development. At the same time, improvements to bus services, easier access to rail, and the development of walking, cycling and riding routes will help reduce reliance on car transport.

Underlying principles

- An adequate and useable water supply will be available for all new developments and, where practicable, existing deficiencies will be remedied.
- Effective solid and liquid waste disposal will be ensured.
- Adequate flood protection will be a prime consideration in any development.
- Access to efficient and useful public transport will be improved.
- The road networks will be upgraded as appropriate to improve logical connections within the area and to the city and region.
- Appropriate provision will be made to allow for choice in transport modes (pedestrians, cycles, rail and road).
- Ensure public transport networks efficiently serve their catchments and destinations.
- Ensure short-term development options do not compromise long-term transport outcomes.
- The Council will use opportunities to enhance infrastructure created by private investment to ensure it will be adequate for the city’s future needs.