Summary of Consultation
on the
Karori housing choice and town centre planning
May 2015, City Planning and Design
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION
Housing choice and town centre planning: Karori

Contents
1.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1
  1.1 Background ................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Consultation process ..................................................................................................................... 1
  1.3 Responses .................................................................................................................................... 2
2.0 Consultation outcomes ...................................................................................................................... 2
  2.1 Key themes ................................................................................................................................... 2
  2.2 Comments by question .................................................................................................................. 3
    Question 1: Where should medium-density housing development happen in your suburb? ........... 3
    Question 2: What standards should we have to manage the design of medium-density housing? . 3
    Question 3: What do you like most about your town centre? .......................................................... 4
    Question 4: What are the most important issues for your town centre? .......................................... 4
    Question 5: Are there any improvements you would like to see in your town centre? .................... 5
3.0 Conclusions ....................................................................................................................................... 6
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background
In 2008 Wellington City Council consulted on the potential for a number of suburban centres being zoned for increased residential density. At the time, it was agreed that two areas, Johnsonville and Kilbirnie, would be the focus of this work initially. The rezoning in Johnsonville and Kilbirnie has been completed and the planning provisions allowing medium-density are in effect in those areas. In February 2015, the Council agreed Karori and Tawa should be the next investigation suburbs for medium-density housing.

In parallel with the rezoning, the Council completed town centre planning and upgrade programmes for Johnsonville and Kilbirnie. The town centre upgrades support the planned increase in residents in these areas. Consequently, a town centre planning exercise and upgrade works are planned for Karori and Tawa.

1.2 Consultation process
The Council conducted an early consultation with the Karori community on town centre planning and housing choices, from 19 March to 17 April 2015.

For this consultation, letters were posted to approximately 4500 ratepayers in Karori. This included an information leaflet on housing choice and town centre planning, and a feedback form. The leaflet included mapping showing walkable catchments surrounding Karori centre and Marsden Village, in order to assist residents in identifying where medium-density housing could go. It also featured examples of medium-density residential. The key messages were:

- Best practice medium-density development is generally located around services and transport, ideally close to a town centre; and
- Medium-density housing can be done in a range of ways, sizes and formats; including two storey buildings.

Officers attended a drop-in centre at the Karori Library between 21 March and 25 March. During these sessions, Council officers explained the projects and answer questions from the community. Explanatory posters outlined a number of issues and opportunities for residents to consider, including:

- Karori has a good range of shops and services and no or very few retail property vacancies. However, there are limited opportunities for new businesses to locate in the town centre or for existing ones to expand;
- The Council is proposing to sell the former St John’s Church site and is interested in receiving feedback on its future. This site presents a unique opportunity for new development at the town centre entrance;
- The library, community and recreation centre form a strong cluster of community services. The planned Events Centre can add to this cluster and needs to be carefully integrated with its neighbours;
- Parkvale Road is an extension of the town centre. There may be opportunities for more businesses to locate there as commercial space along Karori Road becomes scarce, and for the street to become more pedestrian-friendly;
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION
Housing choice and town centre planning: Karori

- Marsden Village has a strong identity. Its challenge for the future is to maintain its appeal as the original street improvements age. In contrast, the challenge for Karori town centre is to improve its image and character; and
- Karori Road is a busy arterial with heavy traffic volumes and buses. We are assessing the road for bus priority and cycle lanes. We will consult with the community on this later this year.

The other activities undertaken during this consultation were:

- A webpage was setup specifically for consulting in Karori, and included links to the Housing choices webpage and the town centre planning webpage. A feedback page was added to present initial consultation findings;
- A media strategy involving traditional and social methods. This included WCC webpages, Facebook, Twitter, newspaper, email alerts, etc;
- An information evening on Wednesday 25 March was attended 40 to 50 people;
- Council officers presented to the Karori Association;
- Council officers had a number of informal discussions with key stakeholders; and
- Tawa and Karori were featured on the ‘Our 10 Year Plan’ website, under Idea 6 ‘Strengthening Town Centres’.

1.3 Responses
The consultation resulted in 300 submissions, representing more than 412 submitters within the community. The submissions were:

- 261 submissions from the general community via the direct feedback lines. These were the feedback forms either posted, completed online, or emailed to Council officers;
- 35 submissions from ‘Our 10 Year Plan website’; and
- 4 submissions from associations (Marsden Village Association Inc; Karori Association; The Architectural Centre Inc; and New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities.)

2.0 Consultation outcomes

2.1 Key themes
Common themes emerged through the consultation process. The responses highlight what submitters consider important, worth continuing or what needs improvement in both the residential and town centre parts of Karori

The themes related to the proposed medium-density in Karori are below:

- Generally people accept that Karori is suitable for medium-density housing; although the capacity of infrastructure is a key concern.
- The most accepted location for medium-density is around the town centre.
- Submitters question the impact medium-density housing would have over time on Karori, specifically the local character.
- Existing features of homes are important; such as setbacks, heights, open space provisions and sunlight and noise controls.
- Two storeys is the preferred height for medium-density housing.
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION
Housing choice and town centre planning: Karori

- High-quality design and materials are necessary to ensure new housing is appropriate in the local context.
- Car parking on streets is currently an issue, and new development should not exacerbate this.

The themes related to the town centre of Karori are below:

- The town centre does not function well due to traffic and built-form issues.
- The community would support a redevelopment of Karori Mall and Mobil petrol station.
- The community would support a greater and more diverse town centre, given Karori is a large suburb.
- The number and diversity of shops available is good for basic needs and services.
- Access to the centre is good including walking and public transport. However car parking is an issue.
- There is a good existing community atmosphere.
- Infrastructure, specifically roading and traffic, are a concern. Improvements to Karori Road, additional car parking and alternative transport methods and routes are required.

2.2 Comments by question

Housing choice

Question 1: Where should medium-density housing development happen in your suburb?
64% of submitters (265 submitters) support medium-density housing and 34% (140 submitters) oppose it. Of the 265 supportive submitters, 46% agree that medium-density housing should be located within walking distance from the town centre and transport links.

By the numbers
- 9% of submitters support medium-density housing generally.
- 29% of submitters support medium-density housing around the centres or transport links.
- 26% of submitters support medium-density in other areas of Karori, such selected streets mostly around the town centre, south Karori, outer areas or the entire suburb.
- 12% of submitters do not support medium-density housing generally.
- 20% of submitters do not support medium-density housing in Karori specifically. This is primarily because of traffic and infrastructure concerns, although other reasons such as character were also given.
- 16% of submitters highlighted that infrastructure improvements must be completed ahead of any change of zoning. The majority that responded this way also supported medium-density housing in some form.

Question 2: What standards should we have to manage the design of medium-density housing?
This question attracted a wide range of responses. The common themes are:
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION
Housing choice and town centre planning: Karori

- Two storey is an acceptable building height;
- Local character, privacy and sunlight access are important;
- Setbacks and site coverage are the proposed controls; and
- Open space is desired, preferably a private space with some acceptance of shared spaces.

By the numbers
- 33% of submitters see setbacks, site coverage, sunlight access, privacy and height as key controls.
- 28% of submitters want controls to limit height to two storeys and ensure that designs fit with the local character.
- 16% of submitters recommend that housing should include or have access to outdoor private, green or garden spaces.
- 16% of submitters want quality of design and types of materials included in the controls.
- 9% of submitters reference parking controls for new development, with common theme being lessening the impact on street parking.
- 7% of submitters support building above two storeys, with most of those preferring a maximum of three storeys.
- 7% of submitters suggest the existing rules and controls should be used to govern medium-density housing.
- 4% of submitters want environmentally friendly development.

Town centre planning

Question 3: What do you like most about your town centre?
Submitters mention the town centre is compact and walkable and is well serviced by bus connections. There is also a strong sense of community and atmosphere. 59% of submitters like the shops, community services and convenience of the town centre. 21% like the urban character and the community atmosphere of Karori, while 6% of submitters do not like the existing centre.

By the numbers
- 29% of submitters think the centre is convenient (size and access are good, although parking is identified as an issue).
- 27% of submitters like the services provided.
- 26% of submitters specifically identified the library as an asset to the community.
- 18% of submitters highlight Karori has a good community atmosphere.
- 9% of submitters suggest that the bus service (to and from the CBD) is good.
- 8% of submitters like the existing urban character of Karori.

Question 4: What are the most important issues for your town centre?
60% of submitters highlight infrastructure capacity concerns. This includes traffic, public transport, car parking as well as social infrastructure such as schools. 36% of submitters say there are issues in the town centre including the mall and its supermarkets, the Mobil petrol station, the current public realm.

By the numbers
• 48% of submitters reference **transport and traffic issues**. Congestion is highlighted as a major problem during peak times, while many submitters note there is only one major route in and out of Karori.

• 19% of submitters mentioned **the mall as being inadequate and unattractive**.

• 16% of submitters say that **car parking at the mall and around the community facilities is insufficient**.

• 9% of submitters say the **suburb is crowded**.

• 9% of submitters suggesting **the town centre does not have enough shopping variety** for the size of the suburb.

• 8% of submitters specifically mentioning **the two supermarkets as an issue** constraining the town centre.

• 8% of submitters say **general infrastructure is already failing or at capacity**. Stormwater infrastructure is a known issue in Karori.

• 8% of submitters say **the centre is lacking or has no identity or heart**.

• 7% of submitters suggested the **Mobil petrol station is poorly located** and either should be moved or removed.

• 7% of submitters note the **schools are at capacity**.

**Question 5: Are there any improvements you would like to see in your town centre?**

Primarily the improvements sought reflect the key sites and traffic issues from Question 4. 40% would like redevelopment involving the Mall or Mobil station and 38% would like transport and traffic issues resolved. 20% highlighted improvements to the local shopping offerings, while 18% want a better public realm.

**By the numbers**

• 35% of submitters want the **existing Karori Mall redeveloped**. Specifically, getting one full size supermarket is a priority. Car parking and aesthetics were also important to submitters.

• The transport issues attract a range of support and solutions:
  - 21% want the **congestion improved**;
  - 12% would like the **car parking improved**;
  - 3% want **traffic calming implemented in Karori**, which could be physical changes to the roads or a 30km/h speed limit;
  - 9% want **bus lanes** implemented; and
  - 9% would like **cycle lanes** in Karori.

• 15% want **increased shopping and retail diversity** in the town centre.

• 12% of submitters would like the **Mobil station site to be redeveloped**. Submitters noted that the site was large and had potential to bring the community and shopping parts of the centre together. Many submitters supported moving the Mobil station, which would allow the station to remain in the suburb.

• 10% of submitters want **an open or green space at the heart of their town centre**.

• 9% of submitters would like **general urban realm improvements** (pavements, street trees, signage etc).

• 9% support **construction of the events centre**.

• 6% of submitters specifically highlight the need for **pedestrian improvements for the town centre**.
5% want entertainment facilities improved; with the most common response being the reintroduction of a cinema.

4% would like a public secondary school built in Karori.

3% want more land made available for commercial development.

3.0 Conclusions

The main messages from the public consultation are:

- Infrastructure capacity and resilience is a repeated concern throughout responses to all questions.
- The overall response was supportive of medium density around the town centre, even among those with infrastructure concerns.
- More meaningful consultation is required on the standards for medium-density housing. Responses were lacking detail due to the wide question posed. Limiting the height of buildings to two storeys was the significant response.
- Submitters are concerned with new housing not fitting in with the existing local character.
- Car parking is important, and may involve a range of solutions. Primarily medium-density housing should not impact the on-street parking availability. Also, car parking at the town centre is difficult, so alternative modes of travel must be well catered for.
- The library and other civic buildings form a valuable hub for the community. However, the public space in front of the library is not sufficient.
- The local services and the schools foster the local community atmosphere.
- Some of the key interventions that the community wish to see relate to private enterprise on private land.