

# Roland Sapsford, Hearing Stream One

- ▶ This is a personal submission
  - ▶ Extensive work on emissions, transport and cities in the 1990s at MfE
    - ▶ Enabling Sustainable Communities paper
    - ▶ Urban chapter for Environment 2010 Strategy
    - ▶ Carbon tax and transport investment modelling
  - ▶ Lead author of Urban Report for Project Foresight, 1998
  - ▶ Member of Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's Urban Advisory Group 1998-1999
  - ▶ Transforming Transport project 2007-2008
  - ▶ Conference papers on cities, transport and emissions 2007 and 2008
  - ▶ Currently, CEO of Climate and Health Alliance in Australia



# Greenhouse Gases, Density, Planning

# Density and urban form

- ▶ **Density** (people/hectare) per se is an indicator, with no simple connection with emissions.
- ▶ Two types of density often discussed as though they are the same:
  - ▶ **Generalised density** (average city wide or region wide density)
  - ▶ **Focal density** (density at a granular or “neighbourhood” level)

# Planning and Urban Emissions

- ▶ **Building** energy service use:
  - ▶ Limiting shading of existing dwellings
  - ▶ Influencing site orientation for new builds
  - ▶ Master planning larger developments to make the best use of passive solar resources
- ▶ **Transport** options and choices:
  - ▶ Location and form of development in relation to service, amenities and employment
  - ▶ Local design quality and sense of place
  - ▶ Ensuring quality public realms to support “density done well”
  - ▶ Enabling agency and community cohesion

# Planning matters

- ▶ Over the long term, planning has a significant influence on how people choose to travel, and the nature and length of the trips they make.
- ▶ All these in turn influence emissions from transport. The cumulative effect is very large.
- ▶ The Climate Change commission notes:  
*“..reducing emissions through the design of towns and cities depends on decisions that are made today.”*  
*(para 170)*

# The NPS-UD

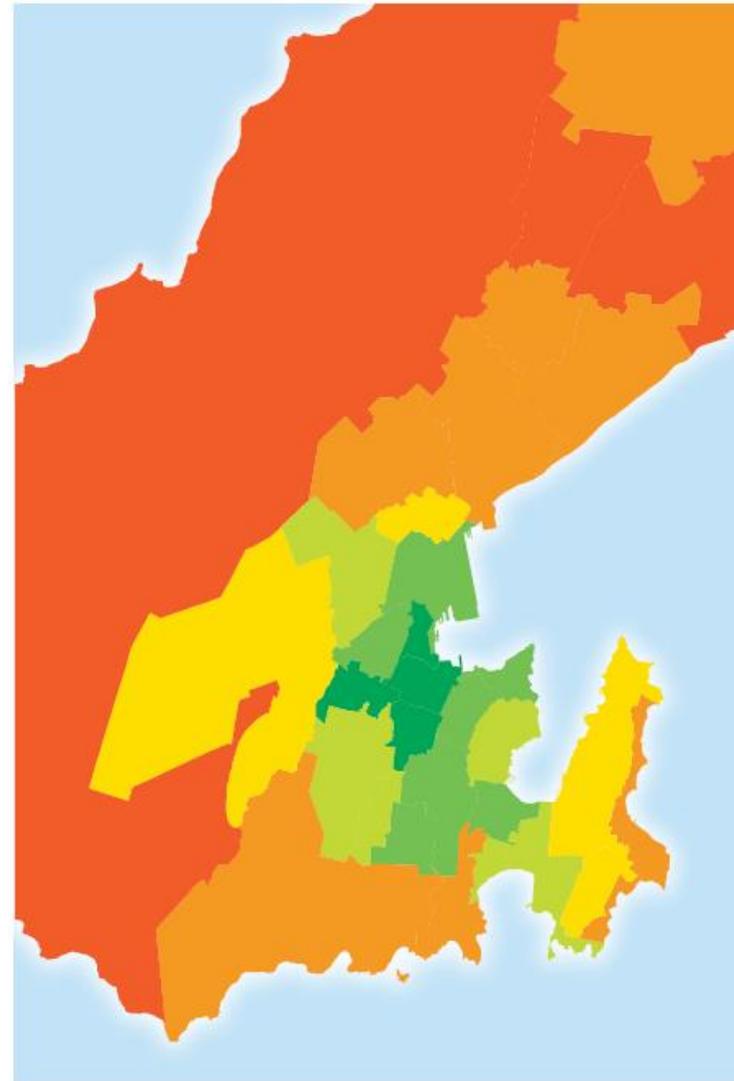
- ▶ **Policy 1:** *Planning decisions contribute to well-functioning urban environments, which are urban environments that, as a minimum:*
  - ▶ **support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and**
  - ▶ *are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.*
  
- ▶ **Objective 8:** *New Zealand's urban environments:*
  - ▶ **support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and**
  - ▶ *are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change.*

These are positive obligations framed in unambiguous terms.

# Wellington

- ▶ *“Road transport contributes about 35% of the city’s emissions and is an area where we need to see significant reductions”*
- ▶ Per capita transport emissions higher in lower density, outlying suburbs
- ▶ Wellington City, especially within the Town Belt, is already relatively dense, with relatively low car dependence.

Estimated vehicles km travelled per person based on census responses (Census and WCC)



# The Proposed Plan

- ▶ The Proposed District simply states

*The City's built environment support a net reduction in the City's carbon emissions by 2050*

- ▶ 2050 is well-beyond the statutory time-frame for a District Plan; what happens until then?

- ▶ In relation to urban form the PDP states

*A compact form contributes to reducing the City's carbon emissions and residents' need to travel long distances in private vehicles. It also incentivises more sustainable travel modes such as walking, cycling, and public transport.*

- ▶ Is this enough?

# The Problem with the Proposed Plan

- ▶ focus on broad brush upzoning, emphasises inner-city
- ▶ envisages a large number of areas where relatively large single developments could be built up to six to eight storeys.
- ▶ Likely outcome: “pepperpotting” of such structures, with few controls as to the nature, location and form of these or on their impact on existing communities.
- ▶ Supporting emissions reduction requires much clearer direction as to the location, form and sequencing of developments.

# What reduces emissions

- ▶ **Focal density in the right place with the right links:** Large falls in motorised vehicle use – and hence emissions - are associated with changes from low to medium density that *also*
  - ▶ create more localised, walkable communities, with services and amenities closer at hand for **both existing and new residents**
  - ▶ are linked by public transport and active mode facilities to other such clusters and the centre of towns.

*Cerver, Guerra and Al: Beyond Mobility: Planning for People and Places, 2016, summarised at p213*

- ▶ **In Wellington:** increases in focal density in relatively low density outer areas, rather than generalised increases in density in relatively high density areas (such as the suburbs within the Town Belt).
  - ▶ “Pepperpotting” can make things worse if it drives people out, reduces focal density or makes community less cohesive

# The Solution

- ▶ more actively prioritise “retrofitting suburbia” / “sprawl repair” – medium density mixed use development in the heart of lower density areas, with the potential for good public and active transport connections

1. include a more precise emission reduction objective:

*Manage the rate, form and scale of development to reduce building and transport Greenhouse Gas emissions over the life of the Plan.*

2. amend the built environment explanatory text:

***Well-designed, focal increases in density in lower density areas associated with relatively high emissions, delivered through increases in mixed use, medium density development can** contribute to reducing the City’s carbon emissions and residents’ need to travel long distances in private vehicles. **Such development** also incentivises more sustainable travel modes such as walking, cycling, and public transport.*

3. review the provisions throughout the Plan to implement this evidence-based approach.

Questions?



# Quality Urban Environments

ARO VALLEY AS AN EXEMPLAR

# Urban Quality – what the NPS-UD says and doesn't say

- ▶ **Objective 4:** *New Zealand's urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations.*
- ▶ This is about
  - ▶ responsiveness and needs
  - ▶ people and communities
  - ▶ now and the future
- ▶ This is not about ignoring adverse effects
- ▶ Council cannot disregard potential adverse effects on the environment because a proper assessment could be onerous under the NPS-UD

# People and communities have common needs

- ▶ We are living biological creatures and social beings - certain experiences are generally good or bad for us as humans
- ▶ Examples include sunlight, green space and views of green space, a sense of connection and community and a sense of agency
- ▶ The way these matters play out through the planning system is – among other ways – through the use of the resource consent process to provide granular decision-making depending on the interaction of factors such as topography and insolation

# Practical Planning Guidance – the Urban Design Protocol

- ▶ The Urban Design Protocol is still current; it provides guidance around what matters in general for a well-functioning urban environment
  - ▶ Context:
    - ▶ seeing buildings, places and spaces as part of whole towns and cities
  - ▶ Character:
    - ▶ reflecting and enhancing the distinctive character, heritage and identity of our urban environment
  - ▶ Choice:
    - ▶ ensuring diversity and choice for people
  - ▶ Connections:
    - ▶ enhancing how different networks link together for people
  - ▶ Creativity:
    - ▶ encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions
  - ▶ Custodianship:
    - ▶ ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy
  - ▶ Collaboration:
    - ▶ communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

# Relating this to the PDP

- ▶ Wellington is a uniquely folded landscape amongst Tier 1 cities
- ▶ Topography matters
- ▶ The PDP lacks the granularity needed to maintain and enhance the quality of the urban environment and enable people and communities to meet their needs on an ongoing basis
- ▶ Aro Valley is an exemplar of how this plays out in practice

# How the Operative Plan works in practice

- ▶ Topography influences sunlight, privacy, and interacts with design to determine the quality of the environment at a site by site and overall community level.
  - ▶ *The steep East-West valley and folded ridgelines that define Aro Valley make it a compact and unusual settlement. Most of its major streets run above significant streams and rivers. It has a high population density and is demographically diverse. It is characterised by a substantially intact and distinct heritage character and, unusually for inner-Wellington, a high proportion of mature green space within the developed area.*
  - ▶ *Aro Valley has very “restrictive” rules – 40% site coverage, a 9 or 7.5m height limit and 45 degree recession planes. Renovations as well as new builds usually trigger the need for a resource consent. Despite this, Aro Valley has grown steadily through infill housing, largely without comment or controversy. The Valley has continuously added new dwellings over the last twenty years at a rate similar to other suburbs across Wellington.*
  - ▶ *Sunlight is a scarce resource in parts of the Aro Valley. In practice, the current rules serve to enable consideration of site specific effects, and open the door to conversations about shading and other relevant issues.*

# Modifying the Proposed Plan

- ▶ Matters such as sunlight, dampness, privacy and personal safety are not simply issues of aesthetics and opinions about amenity.
  - ▶ go to the core of whether people and communities can meet their social, economic and cultural needs and provide for their health and safety, now and into the future.
- ▶ Aro Valley offers a stark example of how the Proposed District Plan fails to consider the interaction of – for example - topography and insolation. My submission provides more detail and examples of this.





# Proposal

- ▶ At the strategic level, an additional objective:  
*Manage development to maintain and enhance the quality of the built environment*
- ▶ An additional qualifying matter:  
*“localised impacts of topography on the quality of the urban environment”*
- ▶ More granular, “spot zoning” in Aro Valley, reflecting the Urban Design Protocol, and providing for
  - ▶ increased permitted heights on specific sites where the quality of the urban environment can be maintained
  - ▶ resource consent assessments to manage design and effects on sunlight, privacy, wind etc arising from topography on a site by site basis across all sites
- ▶ These matters are additional and distinct from consideration of character and heritage

Questions – in a moment!



# Te Tiriti o Waitangi

PROCESS AND PRACTICE

# Partnership and Process

- ▶ In *Ko Aotearoa Tenei* Justice Williams, now of the Supreme Court, characterised Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a series of enduring solemn promises.

*As a nation we should shift our view of the Treaty from that of a breached contract, which can be repaired in the moment, to that of an exchange of solemn promises made about our ongoing relationships.*

- ▶ He went on to say:

*This implies not only kaitiaki control of taonga where that is justified ; it also implies a genuine infusion of the core motivating principles of mātauranga Māori – such as whanaungatanga and kaitiakitanga – into all aspects of our national life.*

# A modest proposal

- ▶ If we genuinely wish to realise the partnership embedded in the Treaty, then we will have to consider how core motivating principles of mātauranga and tikanga are embedded throughout the Plan.
- ▶ The Panel may wish to reflect from time to time on how this broader task is going, and whether the overall form and shape of the Plan is consistent with this.
- ▶ One focus could be on how the Plan implicitly treats relationships between people and communities, as well as more formal connections between Council processes and iwi leadership.

Thank you

Questions?