

Good Morning,

I'd like to start off with a short speech, after which I am happy to answer questions.

My name is Ashley Redshaw, I'm a student studying Urban Planning. I'm here today speaking on behalf of Rod Bray from Northbridge Properties in support of 15 minute walkable catchments around the Wellington CBD.

First of all, let me say I am grateful to be able to speak to you this Morning on walkable catchments, and although I've only been studying for a brief time it's a matter that myself and Mr Bray feel quite strongly about, having **strong connection** to the city, having developed housing there in his previous career.

Wellington is already New Zealand's **most walkable city** in terms of reaching amenities within the shortest walk time<sup>1</sup>. There are multiple factors that influence this statistic, but it's largely due to the **typography, historical influences** and most importantly **appropriate density**, that is **density which incorporates and encourages mixed use planning**. Waha Kotahi guidance from the 2022 Aotearoa urban street planning and design guide states that the city centres of Auckland and Wellington form **highly walkable catchments**, 2-3 km across of **continuously connected, dense city blocks** with **high concentrations** of walkable destinations supported by **high capacity** and **frequent** public transport stops and stations<sup>2</sup>.

Walkable cities are great cities. Walkable cities are not some unobtainable Scandinavian dream, they are the perfect blueprint for how Wellington could be moving forward, in line with government direction from the NPS-UD. The benefits of a walkable city are that its design encourages carbon reductions by **decreasing the reliance** on individual vehicle ownership. It also has health benefits through **encouraging active modes of transport** as well as increased social interactions and a stronger sense of community and place<sup>3</sup>.

But back to the key concept of density. For without density, a city lacks structure. Within a 10 minute walkable catchment, the city is simply failing to incorporate those willing to walk to work

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264275122003638>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/aotearoa-urban-street-planning-and-design-guide/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0264275122003638>

or amenities. The CBD needs a larger catchment because it has the greatest number of jobs and the greatest concentration of activities and amenities<sup>4</sup>.

People are willing to walk to public transit. As per our original submission, Auckland Council's 'Walkable Catchment Analysis' found that in **excess of 50%** of commuters walked further than 800m to their **Northern Express Busway Station**. Constellation and Sunnynook stations had a median walk distance of 1.2km and 1.14km. Albany station had a median commute of 2.7km. This demonstrates that walkability varies between individuals, the report demonstrates that a 15 minute walk is realistic, for a significant proportion of commuters, and we would like to see Wellington benefit.

It's important to add that a denser city also makes for a more interesting walk. Would you rather walk down Cuba street or a regular suburban street. Density done right makes would increase the availability of daily amenities and luxuries, which benefits residents and tourists alike. As of the 2019 census survey, transportation was the third largest proportion of household expenditure in New Zealand<sup>5</sup>. A walkable city would reduce the reliance on car dependency. This saves money for its residents by being more walkable, while the city reduces its carbon emissions, but it also is the cool kind of city that Wellingtonians desire. A 2019 Wellington City Council survey showed feedback showed **support toward intensification** of the city centre so people can work and live without a car.

A larger catchment provides the opportunity to increase the housing supply in Wellington central. Access to affordable housing is one of New Zealand's most **persistent long-term** challenges, and these issues have been amplified in recent months. I'm sure you're aware that, In Wellington, the median weekly rent was \$650 in December, making it the most expensive place to rent in Aotearoa that month<sup>6</sup>. Many families and individuals are struggling to buy their own home, while others are struggling to find suitable rental accommodation and are facing difficult choices about meeting their rent and meeting their essential needs

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<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/UnitaryPlanDocuments/PC%2078%20Information%20Sheet%201%20Walkable%20Catchment%20s.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/household-expenditure-statistics-year-ended-june-2019/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/money/2023/01/rents-finish-2022-at-all-time-high-of-580-with-tenants-in-almost-every-region-seeing-increases.html>

Housing and Urban Development identified a number of reasons that the market is not delivering the volume or kind of supply required, with one of the main factors being limited access to land for development.” Increasing the catchment would be in line with government direction through the NPS-UD, providing the land that the market requires to fulfil market supply.

A tighter catchment will only worsen the growth of **urban sprawl** in neighbouring cities inside the region. These people will have to drive into work which has ramifications for the environment, worsening congestion and taking both a physical and mental toll on those sitting, waiting in traffic.

I’d like to finish off with some findings from the 2019 **Planning for growth survey** that affirmed Wellingtonians want a city that’s **compact, connected, and green**. As current and future town planners and government figures it’s ultimately our collective responsibility to deliver this vision and I believe that through Maximising NPS-UD standards by increasing the walking catchment would be in line with the cities goals.