Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

Submission on Wellington City Proposed District Plan

Form 5 Submission on publically notified proposal for policy statement or plan, change or variation

Clause 6 of Schedule 1, Resource Management Act 1991

To: Wellington City Council - City Design & Place Planning

Date received: 08/09/2022

Submission Reference Number #:44

This is a submission on the following proposed plan (the **proposal**): Wellington City Proposed District Plan

Address for service:
159 WEST STREET, Greytown Greytown Greytown 5712
New Zealand
Email: jez.partridge@yahoo.co.nz

I wish to be heard: Yes
I am willing to present a joint case: Yes

Could you gain an advantage in trade competition in making this submission?
- **No**

Are you directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that
(a) adversely affects the environment; and
(b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition
- **N/A**

Submission points

Point 44.1

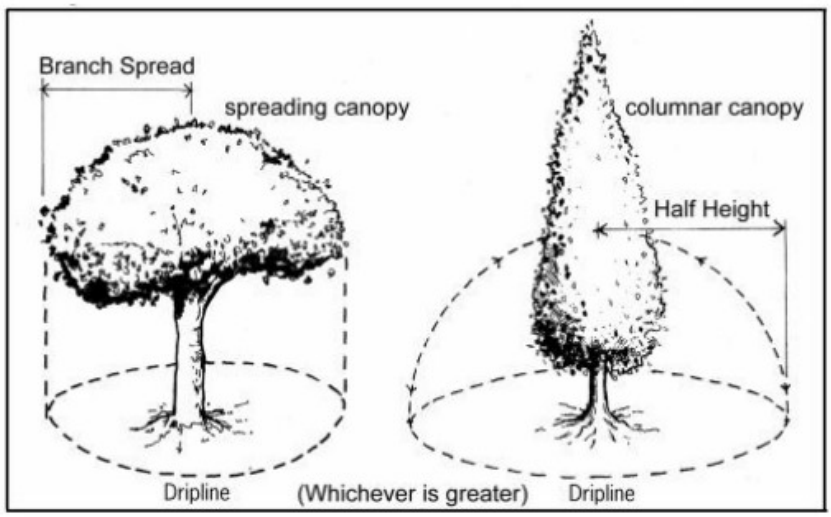
Section: Definitions

Sub-section: Term Definition

Provision:

ROOT PROTECTION AREA	means for a tree with a spreading canopy, the area beneath the canopy spread of a tree, measured at ground level from the surface of the trunk, with a radius to the outer most extent of the spread of the tree's branches, and for a columnar tree, means the

area beneath the canopy extending to a radius half the height of the tree (whichever is greater).



Sentiment: Oppose

Submission:

The proposed definition of a Root Protection Area will fail to protect an adequate area and volume of roots required to maintain the tree's health, functions and physiology. The proposed definition would lead to the loss of roots critical for a tree's health and
stability and lead to root damage which could cause ingress of fungal decay disease or activation of existing pathogenic fungi which ultimately could cause the death of the tree.

Research by multiple renown arborists over decades has shown that the canopy spread/dripline method proposed by Council to determine a critical area of roots is unreliable and leads to an under estimation of the quantity and extent of roots required to support a particular tree. The NZ Arboricultural Association supports a different method which is the '12 times stem diameter multiplier method' to determine the area of roots a tree requires to function and survive and this method is also used in the Australian, American and British Trees and Construction National Standards.

The 'dripline half height' method proposed derives
from a British Standard method which was withdrawn in 2005 and replaced with the '12 times stem diameter' method. The 'dripline or half height method has major flaws and is a rule of thumb method based on anecdote rather
than evidence.

Why is WCC proposing to use a method taken from BS5837 1991 which has since been replaced by the superior 12 times stem diameter method? Why is WCC not following the recomendations of the NZ Arboricultural Association? The 12 times stem diameter RPA method is used by the UK, Aus, and USA Arb Associations and National Standards, so why use an outdated method which fails to protect an adequate area of roots to enable a Notable Tree's survival?.

Council should have used the Section 32 process to determine the 'most appropriate' method to estimate the size and extent of an RPA
for a Notable Tree, and weigh up the 'costs and benefits' of the various methods available in the same way that they would in determining the most appropriate Notable Tree Evaluation Method to use. Methods used to estimate the area of roots
of a Notable Tree to which rules would apply should be evaluated to determine the most appropriate method to use in the District Plan. The most appropriate best practice methodology should then be used as the RPA definition to ensure that the roots of Notable Trees are adequately protected from damage or removal.

Roots are critical to a tree's health and long term survival and many trees in urban area die or are removed early due to disease and dysfunction caused by root damage and loss and this outcome needs to be avoided for Notable Trees. Tree roots systems in urban areas are often modified or restricted by below ground structures. A RPA using Council's proposed method or any of the other methods is an estimation of a nominal area of roots which should ideally be preserved to support the health, stability and physiology of a given tree. I have just undertaken a national study and analysis of root protection methods used by all District

Plans in NZ and I would be happy share my research and work with Council on this issue.

Relief sought

To delete the proposed Notable Tree Root Protection Area method based on dripline or half tree height taken from BS5837 1991, and replace it with the 12 times stem diameter method which is recommended by the NZ Arboricultural Association.

Point 44.2

Section: SCHED6 – Notable Trees

Sub-section: Notable Trees

Sentiment: Oppose

Submission:

The District Plan allows removal of a Notable Tree without a consent if it is deemed to be 'in terminal decline' by a Technician Arborist. I oppose allowing a Notable Tree to be removed without consent if it is deemed to be in terminal decline. As tree's age they inevitably decline and may develop large cavities, die back and be consumed by decay fungi. Such trees may be safe or can be managed to keep them safe, and may live for another 100 years. Such trees could be classed as veteran and be very important for their historical, cultural and ecological value. Such trees should therefore not be allowed to be removed without consent. If a technician arborist decides such a tree is in 'terminal decline' a highly important, veteran tree could be lost without any resource consent process being followed.

Relief sought

The ability to remove a Notable Tree as a permitted activity if it is deemed by a Technician Arborist to be in terminal decline should be removed from the DP rules.

Point 44.3

Section: SCHED6 – Notable Trees

Sub-section: Notable Trees

Sentiment: Oppose

Submission:

The Notable Tree rules allow removal of soil around a Notable Tree's roots using a hydrovac tool. A hydrovac uses water at high pressure to dislodge and then suck away soil around tree roots. Unfortunately the high pressure also removes outer and inner bark and damages cambium which functionally kills tree roots.

Relief sought

Remove the ability to use a hydrovac tool to remove soil around Notable Tree roots.