

# Built Environment

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# Built Environment

## WHAT WE DO

Our built environment work includes:

- enhancing the waterfront
- developing urban parks and squares
- looking after heritage sites
- enhancing city and suburban centres
- assessing and issuing building and resource consents
- ensuring earthquake-prone buildings are upgraded, and
- planning for the city's future growth and development.

## KEY CHALLENGES

Most Wellingtonians are proud of the way the city looks and feels. The waterfront, hills and coastline, colourful houses, all combine to give the city a distinctive, quirky quality.

But we also face some significant challenges. A key one is to manage population growth – an extra 20,000 people are expected in the city over the next two decades. That, combined with changing lifestyles, will create demand for high density/infill housing and new development.

We aim to manage this growth in ways that bring maximum benefits to the city. Our long-term strategy is to focus development around a Johnsonville-city-Newton-Kilbirnie 'growth spine', with strong public transport links.

We hope this approach will preserve Wellington's compact nature, avoid urban sprawl, and protect the environment by encouraging people to live close to their work or to public transport hubs.

We also face some other significant challenges, such as improving protection of heritage buildings (we're proposing a District Plan change to help achieve that), raising overall design standards for buildings and public spaces, and ensuring that suburban areas are as vibrant and attractive as the city centre.

## CASE STUDY: BALANCING GROWTH AND HERITAGE

*We're taking steps to preserve the heritage character of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook.*

A series of District Plan changes proposed during 2005/06 will – if adopted - allow development in the three suburbs while also ensuring heritage homes and shops are protected.

More than 80 percent of the homes in these three suburbs were built before 1919. They range from workers' cottages to grand villas, and they're a big part of the suburbs' colour and character.

If adopted, the District Plan changes will mean resource consents are required for demolition or substantial renovation of homes built before 1930. This extends protection already in place for Thorndon, Mt Victoria and Aro Valley.

Other proposed changes aim to:

- protect the character of the suburbs by ensuring that new multi-unit developments have plenty of open space around them at street level, and
- extend protection for distinctive heritage features such as overhanging balconies and bay windows in Newtown shops.

*The changes aim to balance heritage protection with demand for development.*

In the 10 years to 2005, more than 40 homes were demolished in the three suburbs, largely to make way for new multi-unit developments – some of which have received adverse feedback from local residents.

These suburbs have been under significant development pressure in recent times as demand for additional housing close to the city has increased.

*The NZ Planning Institute has praised our approach.*

The proposed District Plan changes follow several years of consultation and deliberation about how best to protect the character of the three suburbs.

As part of that deliberation, we commissioned architects, who concluded that heritage buildings in the suburbs are irreplaceable and contribute to the distinctive character of Wellington city as a whole.

In April 2006, the New Zealand Planning Institute awarded us its Nancy Northcroft Planning Practice Award for 2006. The institute praised our "leading edge" approach, which combined detailed analysis and in-depth consultation to balance seemingly contradictory goals: protecting streetscape character, encouraging infill development and enabling private property development. Consultation has been carried out on the District Plan changes, with the weight of submissions in favour of heritage protection. Decisions will be made during 2006/07.

*We're also making other enhancements in Newtown*

As well as protecting Newtown's historic character, we have carried out work to upgrade Riddiford Street, and we've made plans for an upgrade of Newtown Park.

**"Residential development and intensification can now occur with some checks and balances, in a way that enhances the residential character of surrounding areas."**

**– NZ PLANNING INSTITUTE.**

**“Wellington is a creative and memorable city that celebrates its past through the recognition, protection and conservation of its built heritage.”**

**– WCC BUILT HERITAGE POLICY.**

### KEY FACTS

Percentage of residents who think Wellington is a great place to live: 96.

Percentage of New Zealanders who think the city is an attractive place to visit: 81.

Percentage who think heritage buildings and other heritage features add to the city's character: 91.

WHAT IT COST		Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual
Net (Expenditure)/Revenue by activity \$000		2006	2006	2006	2005
1.1.1	Urban Planning	1,770	1,752	(18)	1,680
1.3.1	Heritage	50	50	-	131
1.3.2	Heritage Development	578	473	(105)	325
1.3.3	Waterfront	321	2,495	2,174	1,915
1.4.1	Development Control and Facilitation	3,996	3,727	(269)	4,100
1.4.2	Building Control and Facilitation	4,384	4,982	598	4,863
1.4.3	Smart Growth	315	721	406	-
1.4.4	Public Space and Centre Development	1,014	1,095	81	346
<b>Operating Expenditure</b>		<b>12,428</b>	<b>15,295</b>	<b>2,867</b>	<b>13,360</b>

Capital expenditure \$000		Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual
		2006	2006	2006	2005
1.1.1	Urban Planning	3,464	3,464	-	4,136
1.3.1	Heritage	-	-	-	-
1.3.2	Heritage Development	844	845	1	1,711
1.3.3	Waterfront	16,156	16,156	-	8,360
1.4.1	Development Control and Facilitation	-	-	-	-
1.4.2	Building Control and Facilitation	-	-	-	-
1.4.3	Smart Growth	-	-	-	-
1.4.4	Public Space and Centre Development	5,559	6,544	985	6,440
<b>Capital expenditure</b>		<b>26,023</b>	<b>27,009</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>20,647</b>

## OUTCOME 1.1 LIVABLE CITY

Our aims are for Wellington to be a great place to live, and to offer a variety of places where people can live, work and play in a high-quality environment.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OUTCOME	OUTCOME INDICATORS	2005	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vast majority of Wellington residents continue to see the city as a great place to live.</li> <li>The majority of Wellington residents continue to agree that the city offers a variety of places to live, work and play.</li> <li>There has been a minor increase in the proportion of Wellington residents who agree the city has a variety of places to work.</li> </ul>	Residents who think Wellington is a great place to live (%).	96%	96%
	Residents who think Wellington offers a variety of places to live (%).	95%	95%
	Residents who think Wellington offers a variety of places to work (%).	79%	82%
	Residents who think Wellington offers a variety of places to play (%).	94%	94%
<i>Source - WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey</i>			

### 1.1.1 Facilitator – Urban planning

Under this activity we develop policies and plans to encourage high-quality urban development. Our work ensures the city develops in a way that takes account of its natural environment and unique urban character. Achieving this means understanding the pressures and limits of growth and defining what makes the city distinctive. It also means providing guidance and regulation through the District Plan, which sets out rules on land use and subdivision in the city.

#### What we did and how we performed

- We completed a two-year study on the effectiveness of the District Plan's built environment rules. The study, called *Shaping Up*, found that the District Plan has been successful in promoting a contained city and preventing urban sprawl.
- We proposed District Plan changes to protect Newtown, Mt Cook and Berhampore heritage buildings, while still allowing infill development. The plan changes arose from an urban character study of the three suburbs. The study won a NZ Planning Institute award.
- We undertook consultation and studies in preparation for a review of the District Plan's central area provisions. This is expected to be a challenging piece of District Plan work and will address a range of sometimes conflicting objectives for our central area.
- We resolved 13 District Plan changes that had been appealed to the Environment Court. This was achieved by way of mediated agreement and Environment Court resolutions.
- We commenced work on structure plans for the Northern Growth Management Framework areas, to provide direction for longer-term growth in this area of the city.

What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	1,784	1,801	17	1,772
Revenue	14	49	(35)	92
Net expenditure	1,770	1,752	(18)	1,680
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	3,464	3,464	-	4,136

## OUTCOME 1.2 NETWORK CITY

Our aim is for Wellington to be pedestrian friendly and easy for vehicles to get around.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OUTCOME	OUTCOME INDICATORS	2005	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increasing proportion of Wellington residents find the city's transport and pedestrian network easy to get around and pedestrian-friendly</li> <li>There has been a notable increase in the proportion of Wellington residents who agree the city has a highly inter-connected street system.</li> </ul>	Residents satisfied that Wellington is easy to get around (%).	70%	73%
	Residents satisfied that Wellington is pedestrian-friendly (%).	92%	94%
	Residents satisfied that Wellington has a highly-interconnected street system (%).	65%	71%
<i>Source - WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey</i>			

## OUTCOME 1.3 MEMORABLE CITY

Our aim is for Wellington is to be a memorable, beautiful city that celebrates its distinctive landmarks and heritage.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OUTCOME	OUTCOME INDICATORS	2005	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vast majority of Wellington residents continue to agree heritage buildings, areas, trees and objects contribute to the city's unique character.</li> <li>There has been a notable reduction in the proportion of Wellington residents who agree heritage buildings, areas, trees and objects contribute to their local community's unique character.</li> <li>The proportion of New Zealanders who say that Wellington is an attractive place to visit has remained broadly constant.</li> </ul>	Residents who agree that heritage buildings, areas, trees and objects contribute to the city's unique character (%).	93%	91%
	Residents who agree that heritage buildings, areas, trees and objects contribute to their local community's unique character (%).	86%	79%
	New Zealanders who say that Wellington is attractive to visitors (%).	80%	81%
<i>Source - WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey</i>			

### 1.3.1 Activity – Building protection

We have a statutory responsibility to identify and protect local heritage sites. We value older buildings and work to make sure they are safe, both to preserve the city's heritage and to reduce risk to people. We also work with building owners generally to identify and ensure that earthquake-prone buildings are strengthened.

#### What we did

- We adopted policies on Earthquake-Prone Buildings and on Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings on May 31. Both policies were subject to public consultation. There were 28 submissions received in total.
- We established a database to help us identify buildings that require further assessment to determine if they are earthquake-prone. Currently, over 3,600 buildings have been identified as requiring further assessment.
- We continued to make preparations to re-issue earthquake-prone building notices issued under the previous Building Act 1991.

#### How we performed

##### COMPLETION OF THE POLICY ON DANGEROUS AND EARTHQUAKE PRONE BUILDINGS

The Council adopted policies on Earthquake-Prone Buildings and Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings on May 31 2006. This result met our Annual Plan target to have the policy in place by June 2006.

*Source – Building Consents and Licensing Services, Wellington City Council*

#### What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	50	50	-	131
Revenue	-	-	-	-
Net expenditure	50	50	-	131
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	-	-	-	-

### 1.3.2 Activity: Heritage development

In order to promote Wellington as a place that celebrates its landmarks and heritage, we work with owners to aid restoration and protection of heritage assets. Our District Plan ensures heritage buildings and sites of significance to tangata whenua are recognised and that controls are in place to manage changes to or the removal of heritage buildings, trees, areas and objects.

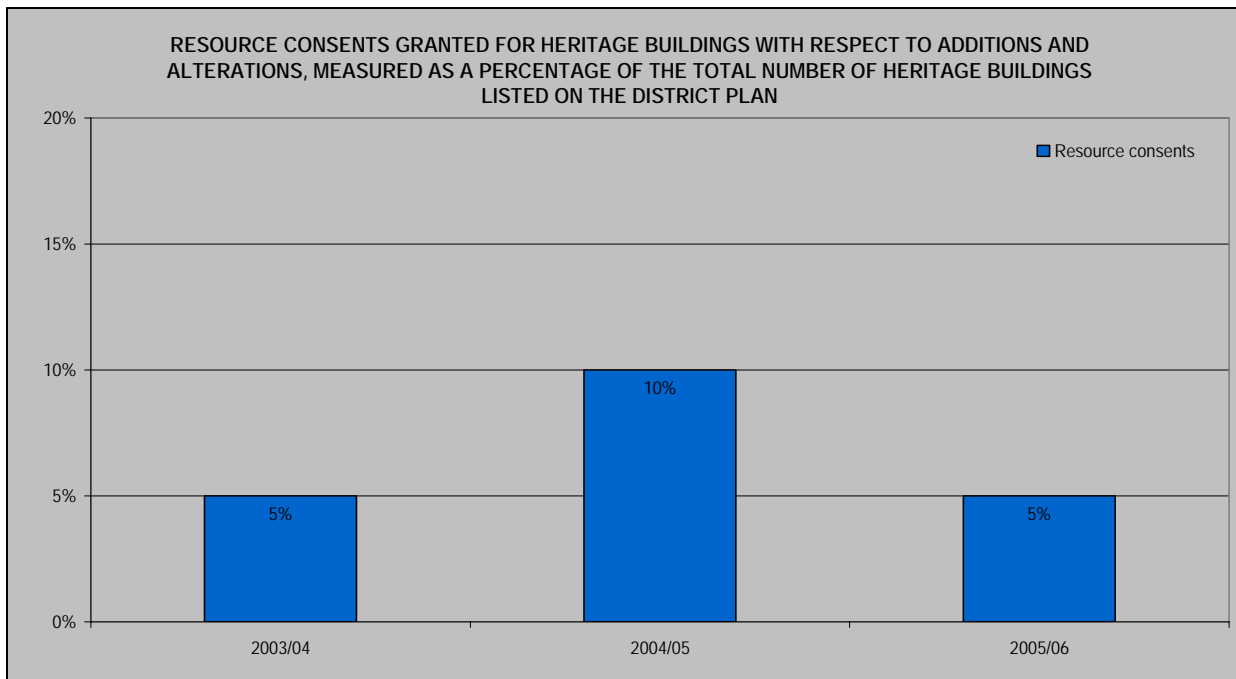
#### What we did

- We proposed a District Plan change to provide added protection for heritage buildings. The changes drew on our Built Heritage Policy, adopted during the year.
- We identified the heritage areas for inclusion in the District Plan Central Area review.
- We completed a review of the Maritime and Old Shoreline heritage trails and started installing new heritage signage in conjunction with Wellington Waterfront Ltd.
- We successfully prosecuted those responsible for vandalising a heritage kowhai tree that had been a feature at the upper end of Tory Street in the central city for over 70 years.

#### How we performed

We processed 25 resource consents for additions and alterations to heritage buildings. This equates to works being done on 5 percent of heritage buildings listed on the District Plan.





Source – Planning and Urban Design Business Unit, Wellington City Council

### What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	581	480	(101)	338
Revenue	3	7	(4)	13
Net expenditure	578	473	(105)	325
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	844	845	1	1,711

### 1.3.3 Activity: Waterfront

The Wellington waterfront is an important area for the city. The Wellington Waterfront Framework, adopted in 2000, provides guidance for development of the waterfront area. Wellington Waterfront Ltd manages implementation of the framework on our behalf.

We want the waterfront to be an inspiring place with great areas for people to enjoy. We want stunning architecture and a strong connection between the city and the sea. We also want to protect and promote the waterfront's heritage for future generations. This includes the maintenance of a heritage trail and placement of commemorative plaques around the waterfront.

#### What happened on the Waterfront

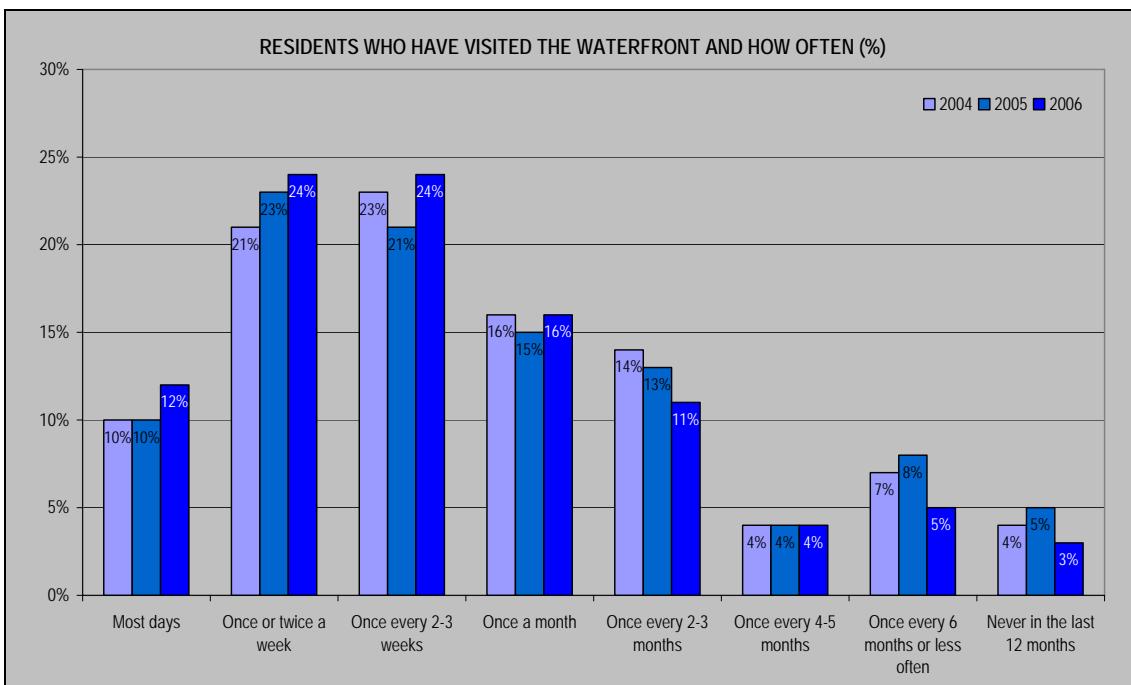
- The first stage of Waitangi Park was completed in time to host significant portions of the New Zealand International Arts Festival.
- A landmark deal was announced that will see New Zealand's first "green" office building developed on the Kumutoto area of the waterfront. Currently known as Site 7, this will be owned and managed by Dominion Funds Ltd. It will contain a mixed use of office space on the upper three levels (accommodating Meridian Energy's corporate office) and public uses on the ground floor. Construction has begun and is due for completion in December 2007.
- Construction of the public space surrounding Site 7 is under way and is also expected to be finished in December 2007.
- The transformation of the Herd Street Post Office building into Chaffers Dock Apartments and Retail Development continued throughout the year.
- Tenders for the development of the Overseas Passenger Terminal and Clyde Quay Wharf were evaluated and a preferred design recommended to the Council.
- Len Lye's Water Whirler – a kinetic water sculpture – was officially opened on 7 March 2006. This jointly won the 2006 Creative Places Award with Bill Cuthbert's SkyBlue sculpture in Post Office Square.
- The restoration of the former Odlins building was completed and renamed the NZX Centre, home to the New Zealand Stock Exchange. The Council-funded electronic ticker-tape banner was erected on the building and went live in late July 2006.
- The Maritime Heritage Trail was installed and launched on the waterfront, presaging further heritage trails throughout the city.
- Two world-renowned architecture firms won an international architectural design competition held to find concepts for the Waitangi precinct's new building sites 1-4. John Wardle Architects of Melbourne won the competition for sites 1-3 adjacent to the Overseas Passenger Terminal. UN Studio of Amsterdam won the competition for site 4 in the lea of Te Papa.
- The year saw the waterfront host a number of events. Highlights included the: Vodafone X-Air Game; New Zealand International Arts Festival (The Earth from Above Exhibition, Les Arts Sauts, Festival Picnics and a range of activities in the National Bank Festival Club); Volvo Ocean Race; National Dragon Boat Championships; Chinese New Year celebrations; Waitangi Day concert; and the World Press Photo Exhibition.

- Resource consent was received for public space and Maori cultural buildings in the Taranaki Street Wharf precinct and surrounding areas. A dispute between the company and the local rowing clubs, who were eager to secure access and car parking for their users, was resolved following an Environment Court-facilitated mediation.

### How we performed

The waterfront has seen a busy year, hosting many events and completing or progressing a number projects. We continue to see the vast majority of Wellington residents making use of the waterfront. Notable increases are evident in the proportion of residents who visit the waterfront monthly.

Our Annual Plan targets were for 96 percent of residents to have visited the waterfront at some stage during the year and for 75 percent to have visited monthly. Both targets were achieved (97 percent and 76 percent respectively).



Source – WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey, February 2006

### What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	5,612	2,539	(3,073)	6,417
Revenue	5,291	44	5,247	4,502
Net expenditure	321	2,495	2,174	1,915
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	16,156	16,156	-	8,360

The net expenditure variance primarily relates to the operations of the Wellington Waterfront project.

## OUTCOME 1.4 COMPACT CITY

Our aim is for Wellington is to be a compact city with mixed land use, structured around a vibrant city centre and suburban centres, and connected by major transport corridors.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OUTCOME	OUTCOME INDICATORS	2005	2006
<p>We use a number of long-term indicators to monitor how the city is changing as it grows and develops.</p> <p>We have established baseline information for measures such as building density within the city and amenity to services such as public transport. Information will be available to reassess these measures in 2007.</p>	Houses located within 100 metres of public transport stops (%). Note: this is a long-term measure and will be assessed in 2007.	44.4%	-
		2003	2006
	Compactness of the city – central city (buildings per hectare).	7.6	-
	Compactness of the city – suburban residential (buildings per hectare).	34.0	-
	Compactness of the city – inner city residential (buildings per hectare). Note: these are long-term measures and will be reassessed in 2007.	19.1	-
<i>Source - Wellington City Council Data Services</i>			

### 1.4.1 Activity: Development control and facilitation

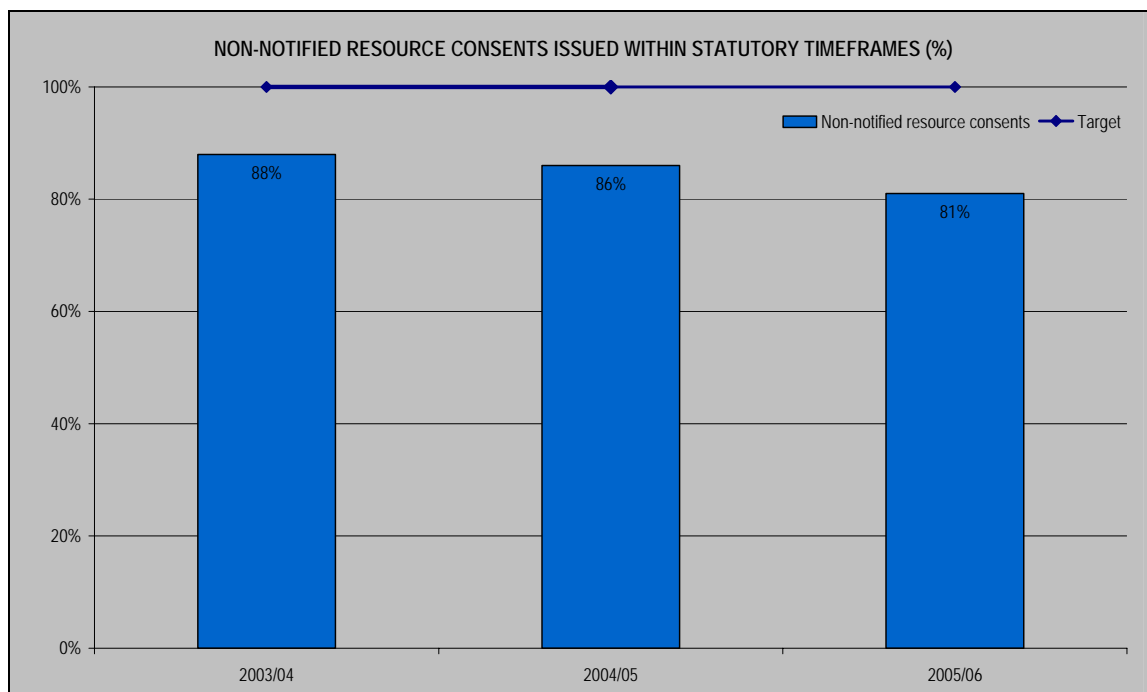
We have a statutory responsibility under the Resource Management Act to ensure land and other resources are used sustainably. The District Plan contains specific policies relating to land and resource use in the city. In line with the plan, we regulate developments to ensure they are safe, sustainable and meet public expectations. This work includes issuing resource consents and monitoring compliance.

#### What we did

- We received 1,004 resource consent applications throughout the year. Of those considered, around 3 percent were notified. This is consistent with previous years and other metropolitan councils around the country.
- We managed the Council hearing for the application by Meridian Energy to construct and operate a 70 turbine wind farm at Makara. This project is the largest resource consent application dealt with by the Council in terms of scale and the number of submissions received. The commissioners' decision to approve the application was appealed and we have just concluded the four-week Environment Court hearing. The decision of the Court is expected to be a reference case for any future large-scale wind farms to be constructed within the coastal regions of the country.
- We carried out successful prosecutions under the Resource Management Act for two instances of deliberate disregard of District Plan requirements. Costs were awarded to the Council in both cases.
- We supported the planning profession by facilitating a NZ Planning Institute 'young planners' forum and attending a 'Planning Expo' held at Massey University.

## How we performed

This has been a challenging year with several large scale and complex applications, such as the Meridian Energy wind farm and the proposed Marine Education Centre, drawing heavily on our planning resources. We have also continued to process a high number of resource consents. Although our performance has declined below previous achievement, the second half of 2005/06 has seen a steady increase in the number of notified applications being processed on time.



Source – Planning Group, Wellington City Council

## What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	5,587	5,246	(341)	5,477
Revenue	1,591	1,519	72	1,377
Net expenditure	3,996	3,727	(269)	4,100
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	-	-	-	-

The increased number of 'Notified' and 'Limited Notified' consent applications has resulted in increased expenditure on expert advice, only part of this has been recovered from applicants.

## 1.4.2 Activity: Building control and facilitation

We have a statutory responsibility under the Building Act to control building developments. This includes ensuring buildings are safe and sanitary, and do not threaten environmental quality or public health (see also 1.3.1 Building protection). Our Building Consents and Licensing Services unit administers our responsibilities. Its work includes issuing and monitoring building consents. We have building guidelines to make sure buildings meet the required standards.

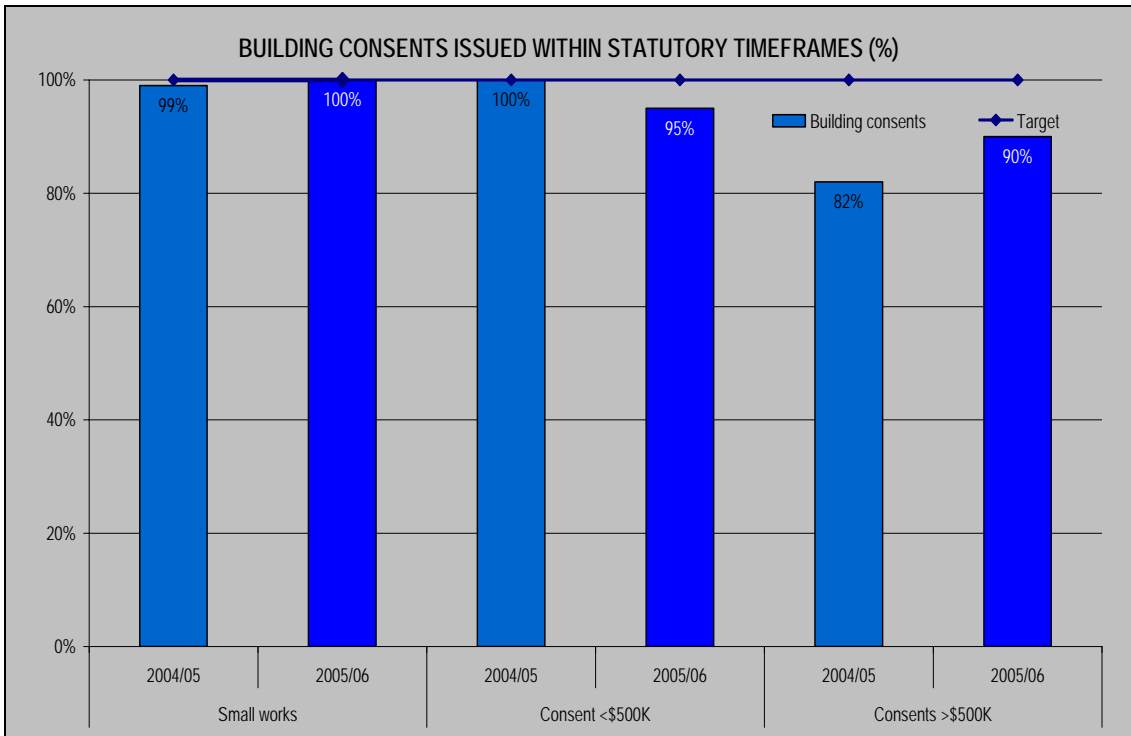
### What we did

- We worked with Wellington Hospital to find solutions for a number of complex matters in relation to the building consent for the main hospital block – a large redevelopment and significant project for Wellington.
- We continued to work in partnership with Porirua, Hutt, Upper Hutt City and Kapiti Coast District Councils to prepare for accreditation and registration as building consent authorities. The group jointly applied for registration in February. Since then, the Department of Building and Housing has stated that it cannot process our application until it has finalised the design of its accreditation and registration scheme.
- During the year, 27 staff were enrolled in two modules of the Diploma in Building Surveying course being run by Weltec.

### How we performed

We have had another busy year processing building consents. Overall, there has been general improvement in the number that we have processed within required statutory timeframes. For those consents that were not issued within statutory timeframes, most were within a working day of the prescribed time requirement.

The complexity of the new Building Act, a national shortage of skilled building officers available to process complex consents, and significant changes to the building code, have all created ongoing challenges in maintaining timeframes.



Source – Building Consents and Licensing Services, Wellington City Council

### What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	10,158	10,872	714	9,519
Revenue	5,774	5,890	(116)	4,656
Net expenditure	4,384	4,982	598	4,863
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	-	-	-	-

Reduced operating expenditure is due to a number of vacancies not being filled in a tight labour market and a delay in the accreditation programme required under the Building Act 2004.

### 1.4.3 Activity: Smart growth facilitation

We want to make sure that the city grows in ways that maintain its unique character and enhance quality of life. Without this focused planning, population growth and economic development could lead to urban sprawl, gridlocked highways and damage to the environment.

### What we did and how we performed

- We drafted an Urban Design Strategy that introduced the concept of a 'growth spine' along which more intensive urban development will be encouraged, along with enhanced amenities and transport infrastructure. This 'growth spine' will stretch from Kilbirnie and Newtown through the city centre into northern areas such as Johnsonville.
- We provided input into the development of the Wellington Regional Strategy via the Quality Regional Form and Systems work area. The Wellington Regional Strategy is due for completion in October 2006 (see also 4.1.1 External relationships).

### What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	317	739	422	-
Revenue	2	18	(16)	-
Net expenditure	315	721	406	-
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	-	-	-	-

Expenditure is below budget due to reduced personnel and related costs.

## 1.4.4 Activity: Public space and centre development

We fund work to upgrade street environments and other public areas in the city and suburbs. We aim to make these areas attractive and safe, with plenty of green space.

### What we did

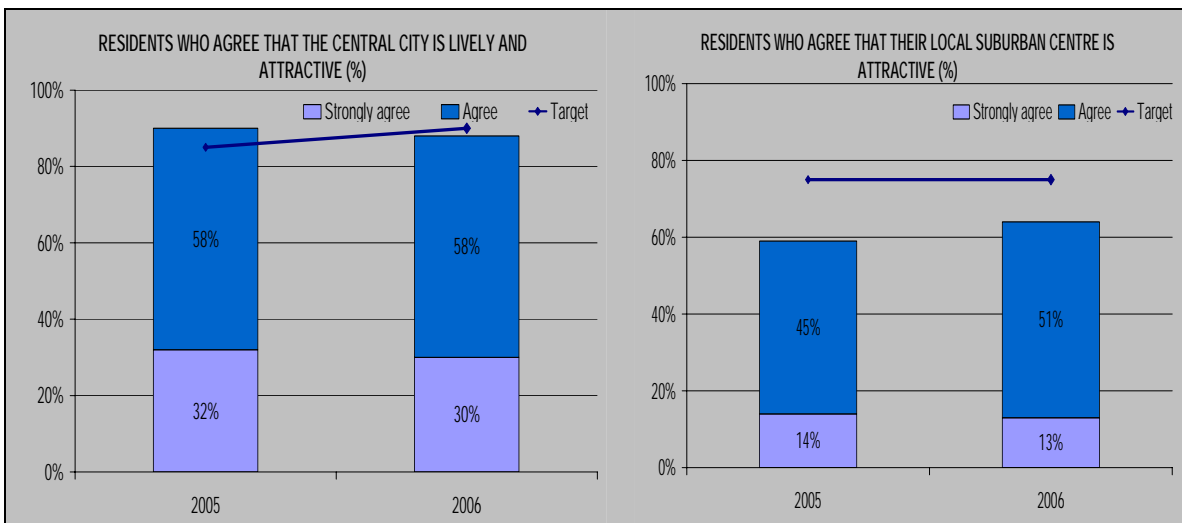
- We redeveloped Glover Park. The refurbished inner-city park was opened by the Mayor on April 26. The design features include generous circulation routes, large grassed terraces, improved lighting, additional trees, and stronger connections to and from Ghuznee and Garrett Streets. The park's new terraces and benches offer a variety of seating options. A large artwork featuring sculptural lighting will be installed in the second half of 2006, along with another pedestrian accessway. Neighbouring residents, businesses, and current park users have expressed delight with the look and feel of the park.
- We completed stage two of the upgrade of Main Road, Tawa. The work included the installation of new clay paving on the footpaths, and new kerbs and street furniture on the western side and adjacent to the Library. There were also alterations to improve pedestrian and traffic safety at the intersection of Main Road and Cambridge Terrace and the installation of white lights in some areas.
- We completed the upgrade of paving and other features at the local shops at Seatoun Village. A new heritage trail sign for Seatoun and nearby bays is to be installed to create a stronger link from the beach to the village.



- We significantly advanced the redevelopment of the Karori town centre. The Community Centre was completed in August 2005 and the new Library was opened in December. The library has subsequently won a New Zealand Institute of Architects award (see 7.1.6 Libraries network).
- We completed an upgrade of Riddiford Street in Newtown. The work included footpath extensions at the street corners with use of new clay paving, trees, seats and bollards. Minor items remain for completion, including some planting and final placement of signage.

### How we performed

We have completed or commenced a number of public space and centre development projects throughout the year, in both the inner city and in suburban centres. Our performance measures suggest that the vast majority of residents continue to think the city centre is lively and attractive (88 percent). Although we did not meet our target, an increasing proportion of residents think their local suburban centre is attractive (5 percentage point increase).



Source – WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey, February 2006

### What it cost

Cost of activity \$000	Actual 2006	Budget 2006	Variance 2006	Actual 2005
<i>Operational projects</i>				
Expenditure	1,013	1,124	111	444
Revenue	(1)	29	(30)	98
Net expenditure	1,014	1,095	81	346
<i>Capital projects</i>				
Cost	5,559	6,544	985	6,440

The Victoria Street/Manners Park has been removed from the planned capital expenditure programme.

## OUTCOME 1.5 BEAUTIFUL CITY

Our aim is for Wellington to be a beautiful city, whose form reflects the unique character and beauty of the harbour and the hills.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR OUTCOME	OUTCOME INDICATORS	2005	2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An increasing proportion of Wellington residents agree that the city's form reflects its natural character.</li></ul>	Residents who agree that Wellington's form reflects the character of the harbour and hills (%).	84%	86%
<i>Source - WCC Resident Satisfaction Survey</i>			