Wellington Urban Growth Plan

Urban Development and Transport Strategy

2014–2043

Absolutely Positively Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

ADOPTED JUNE 2015
Wellington character:
Housing around
Mt Victoria.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wellington City is widely recognised for its high quality of life and stunning natural setting. It also has the country’s highest proportion of people walking, cycling and using public transport for journeys to and from work. This plan aims to continue improving these features.

Wellington City’s population is expected to grow from the current 200,000 to approximately 250,000 over the next 30 years and to become more diverse. Our Wellington Urban Growth Plan ensures that as the city’s population increases, new houses, transport networks, infrastructure and services are developed sustainably and in areas that benefit the city the most so that residents continue to enjoy a world-class quality of life.

This is an action-focussed plan, which builds on, updates and replaces our existing urban development and transport strategies. It seeks to:

- maintain the city’s liveability – the features that support our high quality of life and the city’s character
- keep the city compact, walkable and supported by an efficient transport network
- protect the city’s natural setting – nested between our green hills and coastline, contributing to our distinctive character
- make the city more resilient to natural hazards such as earthquakes and the effects of climate change.

The plan is the Council’s guide for directing investment and supporting development in growth areas – a blueprint for prioritising and managing future growth. This includes actions to support:

- **Transformational growth areas**: We will support quality urban development in locations suitable for growth including the regeneration of existing urban areas and development in new greenfield areas
- **Liveable and vibrant centres**: We will continue improving the central city and suburban centres
- **Real transport choices**: We will continue improving conditions for walking, cycling and public transport, improving our road network, and managing parking more efficiently
- **Housing choice and supply**: We will support an increase in housing supply, encourage a greater variety of housing types and more affordable options, and facilitate the development of medium-density housing
- **Our natural environment**: We will continue to enhance our natural assets, and reduce the environmental impact of urban development and transport
- **City resilience**: We will ensure the city’s buildings, infrastructure and coastline can cope with or adapt to the risks posed by natural hazards and climate change.

The plan will support Council decisions on planning and investment and provide certainty for the city’s stakeholders - developers, central government, iwi, ratepayers and residents. The priority projects identified in the plan will inform our Long-term Plan.

To make sure the plan is effective, it will be reviewed and updated every three years, alongside the Long-term Plan, to reflect changing local priorities and development pressures. This will include assessing the progress made in putting the plan into action and reporting back to Councillors and the wider organisation.

In summary, the Wellington Urban Growth Plan provides a framework to manage the city’s future growth while protecting our environment and heritage, and building on the things that make the city special.

We think it will be a catalyst for positive change.
Wellington’s skyline: Our harbour and city skyline.
The delivery of the public transport spine and cycle lanes will encourage development in the Adelaide Road area. Berhampore and Island Bay will be looked at as future growth areas.

Johnsonville and its town centre will be a targeted regeneration area with major roading improvements and further medium-density housing.

The Petone to Grenada link road will support residential and employment-related development in the Lincolnshire Farm and Stebbings Valley growth areas.

A number of projects will happen in the central city. The Victoria Street upgrade will be followed by improvements and regeneration in Te Aro. Other precincts will also be targeted for investment, including the Civic Centre, our laneways and Kent and Cambridge terraces. A Port Access Plan will look at improving port access. Transport improvements will include the public transport spine, safe cycle lanes and improvements to the State highway network.

Investments will be made in public transport, cycle facilities and the airport precinct. Support and regeneration of Kilbirnie and Miramar town centres will continue as well as guidance on appropriate development for Shelly Bay and Watts Peninsula.
The plan seeks to deliver the following key outcomes:

**A compact city**

To keep Wellington compact, walkable and to minimise the need for new infrastructure, this plan directs future development to existing urban areas with good transport links, infrastructure and community facilities, and to a limited number of new urban areas.

- **Development along the growth spine:** More intensive residential and commercial development is planned along the growth spine between Johnsonville and Wellington Airport, supported by investment in transport and infrastructure.

- **Greenfield growth areas:** New greenfield housing development is encouraged in locations adjoining existing urban areas, such as Lincolnshire Farm and Stebbings Valley. This growth will be guided by the existing structure plan and the Northern Growth Management Framework.

**A liveable city**

The central city and suburban centres provide Wellington with many of the outstanding quality-of-life features we value. This plan ensures the city remains attractive, lively, accessible and safe.

- **Dynamic central city:** The central city is the economic, social and cultural hub for the region. It is a focus for business investment and employment growth, high-density living, high-quality buildings and public areas, events and cultural activities, and investment that will support all modes of transport.

- **Attractive suburban centres:** Suburban centres provide a mix of residential, commercial and social activities. Medium-density housing is encouraged in and around key suburban centres complemented by quality housing infill in residential areas. Growth in suburban centres is supported by improvements to transport infrastructure between these centres and the central city.

- **Transport routes that provide choice:** High levels of walking and cycling are encouraged by investing in safety and quality network improvements. High-quality public transport and improved road links are developed with investment focussed along the growth spine and suburban connections, and support for the New Zealand Transport Agency’s (NZTA) proposed Petone to Grenada link road.
A city set in nature

Our natural setting - including our green belts, reserves, streams and coastline - define the layout and character of the city, and good access to them for recreation is one of the things people love about Wellington. This plan ensures urban growth respects and enhances our natural environment.

- **Identity and sense of place:** The city’s distinctive character and appeal is enhanced by protecting our natural environment, minimising the impact of urban development on the environment and making sure people can easily get to the waterfront and other open spaces.
- **Coastal environment:** Development and activities along the coastline respect and enhance the harbour and rugged coastal areas.

A resilient city

Our heritage assets, infrastructure networks and neighbourhoods all need to be managed to minimise the risk of damage from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, and the effects of climate change.

- **Preserving our built heritage:** The city’s heritage-listed buildings are strengthened to reduce the risk associated with earthquakes and preserve the city’s character.
- **Preparing for natural hazards:** We have a comprehensive strategy for improving the resilience of our city’s buildings, infrastructure and communities.
- **Responding to climate change:** We continue reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, increasing our energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, and managing the risk of sea-level rise and extreme weather events.
Waitangi Park: Green spaces are important to Wellingtonians.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

**Context**

Wellington continues to grow as more people make the city their home, attracted by work opportunities, lifestyle and culture, high-quality services and the proximity to the harbour, hills and our other beautiful natural assets.

Fifteen years ago, only 170,000 people lived in the city. Today our population is just over 200,000. By 2043 the population is expected to have grown to around 250,000.

Wellington is the nation’s capital city and the region’s centre of productivity and innovation. It is crucial that future growth and investment is concentrated in areas that benefit the city the most. The Wellington Urban Growth Plan is the Council’s tool for managing this growth. It updates, combines and replaces our 2006 Urban Development Strategy and Transport Strategy. This plan is consistent with the philosophies of the 2006 strategies in seeking to encourage growth in areas close to services, employment and good public transport.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this plan is to guide the Council’s decisions that relate to planning, growth, land use, housing, transport and infrastructure. It also helps to achieve the goals identified in our other key strategies, contributing to decision-making on economic development, public spaces, community character, the natural environment and recreation.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Direct new growth to suitable areas to maintain the city’s compactness, liveability and natural setting.
- Ensure development occurs close to employment, services, and public and other transport links. This will continue to encourage active modes and the use of public transport, and reduce pressure on our resources and infrastructure. We expect most new development to occur along the growth spine from Johnsonville through the central city to Adelaide Road and Kilbirnie.
- Improve the resilience of the city against the risk of natural hazards and climate change.
- Ensure urban growth contributes to the city’s economic, social and environmental success.
- Help target the Council’s investment on priority projects.

**Key outcomes**

The plan seeks to deliver the following key outcomes:

**A compact city**

The city’s urban areas are surrounded by the Wellington Town Belt and the reserves, rural land and hilltops that form the Outer Green Belt. This has led to the city being compact, which is one of its distinctive features. It also makes our city walkable and helps minimise the need for new infrastructure. To keep Wellington compact, this plan directs future development to locations with quality transport links, infrastructure and community facilities.

**A liveable city**

The central city is the main economic, social and cultural hub of the region. It is attractive, lively, accessible and safe. At a local level, suburban centres provide a focus for community life and access to shops and services. This plan supports vibrant centres through a range of projects.
A city set in nature
The city’s distinctive character is enhanced by protecting our natural environment, minimising the impact of urban development on the environment and making sure people can easily get to the waterfront and other open spaces. To achieve this, the plan emphasises the importance of better green infrastructure such as open spaces, trees and waterways; sustainable transport options; energy-efficient buildings and water-sensitive urban design.

A resilient city
Our heritage assets, coastal areas, infrastructure networks and neighbourhoods all need to be managed to minimise the risk of damage from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, and the effects of climate change. This plan supports our continued leadership in identifying earthquake-prone buildings, planning for emergencies and preparing for climate change.
Where do our population projections come from?

Throughout the plan, the Council has used information from a number of sources. A key source is Informed Decisions (ID). ID is a group of professional demographers, spatial analysts, urban planners, forecasters and IT experts who focus on New Zealand and Australian cities and their people. In Wellington’s case, ID has provided demographic census analysis and forecasting based on the 2006 and 2013 censuses information.

ID works with the Council to look at the current and evolving policies and strategies affecting development, as well as resource consents. ID also works with local developers, property owners, real estate agents and others who can offer additional information to assist in accurate forecasting. This detailed analysis of development combines with demographic and census studies of Wellington City, Wellington Region and New Zealand.

This model, which combines a “ground-up” and a “top-down” approach, produces a more refined forecast for Wellington’s next 30 years than census projections alone. While these are the best demographic forecasts available for the city’s next 30 years, it is possible for growth to accelerate depending on the implementation and the success of specific projects outlined in the plan as well as external events.

Where does the Wellington Urban Growth Plan fit?

The plan helps to achieve our long-term vision for the city, Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital.

It also contributes to the implementation of a number of existing Council policies and action plans including:

- Accessible Wellington Action Plan
- Adelaide Road Framework
- Biodiversity Action Plan (under review)
- Business Improvement District Policy
- Centres Policy
- Central City Framework
- Climate Change Action Plan
- Community Facilities Policy
- Cycling Policy
- Development Contributions Policy
- District Plan
- Earthquake-prone Buildings Policy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Greening Central Wellington
- Heritage Policy
- Jan Gehl Report: City to Waterfront Public Spaces study
- Johnsonville Town Centre Plan
- Kilbirnie Town Centre Revitalisation Plan
- Newlands Centre Plan
- Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan
- Northern Growth Management Framework
- Open Space Access Plan
- Our Capital Spaces
- Parking Policy
- Public Space Design Policy
- Walking Policy
- Waterfront Framework.
The priorities and projects identified in this plan will help inform our Long-term Plan.

The following diagram shows how this plan fits within the Council’s strategic framework.

**Review**

The Urban Growth Plan and associated Implementation Plan will be reviewed and updated every three years to inform the Long-term Plan process.

This will involve contrasting actual growth, urban development and transport patterns against the plan and adjusting our assumptions and proposed actions where needed.