2.0 THE CITY NOW AND BY 2043

Wellington residents enjoy a high quality of life. The city leads the country on measures of social wellbeing, environment and community strength.

On top of being the political capital, the city is also known as the creative industries and arts capital with museums, theatres, high-tech firms and cafes all within easy reach of natural attractions such as the harbour and native bush walks.

The central city is vibrant, attractive and compact, making it easy to get around without a car.

This plan ensures future urban growth and change reinforce the physical and spatial characteristics that make Wellington special. It also ensures the city will continue to provide a high-quality urban environment that contributes to the stimulating urban experience Wellington offers.

Regional context

Wellington is the largest of a number of closely linked cities and districts that make up the Wellington region. The region overall is home to almost 500,000 people with the city accounting for 41 percent of the total. The region has the highest proportion of working-age population and the highest median income in the country.

The city is the economic, cultural and education epicentre of the Wellington region. Wellington businesses rely on the region for its workforce, with more than 30 percent¹ of city workers living outside of the city. Many businesses also rely on the region for customers. Our universities attract people from the whole region, as do our museums, theatres, arts festivals and sporting events. This close relationship between the city and region influences decisions about public transport and roads, as well as investment decisions by institutions and the private sector. This relationship is set to continue well into the future.

¹ Informed Decisions (ID), 2014
Wellington Harbour: A regionally significant resource.
Population and growth

The city population was 200,400 in 2013, and is forecast to grow by almost 50,000 in the next 30 years. The drivers for growth are Wellington’s diverse economy and liveability, which attracts people from other parts of New Zealand and the world. There is expected to be significant ongoing growth in the number of tertiary education students as well as older people.

Population growth and changing demographics will have significant implications for the city’s land-use patterns, and transport and infrastructure investment.

Wellington is an appealing destination for young adults and students, who are attracted to a city with strong educational and employment opportunities and desirable lifestyle and entertainment qualities. This contributes to the city’s residents having higher rates of educational achievement compared with regional and national figures.

The city will undergo a shift as our population ages. By 2043, 13.5 percent of city residents will be over 65, compared with 9.6 percent now. This will have an impact on our housing, transport, social service needs, and economy.

**The population and growth by 2043:**

- The city’s population is expected to increase to around 250,000, with growth directed to maximise benefits to the city.
- The population in the central city area, which grew by almost 100 percent between 2001 and 2013, is expected to increase further by approximately 84 percent - from 18,019 in 2013 to 33,150 in 2043.
- Wellington’s population growth and diversity will foster the city’s vibrancy, the creation of accessible employment opportunities, and support continued investment in housing, transport and other infrastructure.

Source: Informed Decisions (ID), 2014
**Wellington's population history and forecasts**

- **1916**: 72,560 people
- **2001**: 171,100 people
- **2013**: 200,400 people
- **2043**: 246,700 people

*Source: Wellington City Council and ID, 2014*

**Wellington and New Zealand qualifications**

**Wellington**
- **School qualification**: 31.08%
- **No qualification**: 15.66%
- **Bachelor degree**: 12.10%
- **Post school (excluding university)**: 8.22%
- **Higher degree**: 7.54%
- **Not stated/indicated**: 37.2%

**New Zealand**
- **School qualification**: 32.53%
- **No qualification**: 22.80%
- **Bachelor degree**: 18.6%
- **Post school (excluding university)**: 11.13%
- **Higher degree**: 5.71%
- **Not stated/indicated**: 12.10%

*Source: ID, 2014*
The city's emissions are:

- Total dwellings: 77,900 (2013), 220,600 (2028), 246,700 (2043)
- Population: 204,000 (2013), 220,600 (2028), 246,700 (2043)

Increasing number of dwellings and people in Wellington

Change in number of dwellings between 2001-2013 by suburb

Source: ID, 2014
Housing

The city’s projected population growth will result in the need for an additional 21,400 residential dwellings by 2043 (approximately 715 new homes per year). The inner city and adjoining areas will continue to attract the majority of renters, rental investors and young, non-family households, while the majority of families wanting to buy will seek affordable options in the suburbs. An ageing population will increase demand for age-appropriate housing choices (often smaller, low-maintenance housing that is close to services) within people’s local suburbs. This movement could help free up more housing choices for families.

Since 2007, there have been more new central city apartments, medium-density (townhouse and smaller apartment complexes) and infill housing built, than traditional stand-alone (greenfield) housing. This trend is expected to continue and we expect 25 percent of new housing to be low-density, 35 percent medium-density, and 40 percent high-density.

The aim of this plan is to see most of the growth over the next 30 years occurring in the central city and along the growth spine. Greenfield development areas (mainly in the northern suburbs beyond Johnsonville) will provide for the expected demand for new single detached homes.

The city’s housing by 2043 - what we plan to happen:

- Residential development forecasts show the number of dwellings in the central area (Wellington Central, Te Aro, Pipitea and Thorndon) will grow approximately 88 percent in the 30 years from 2013 to 2043 - from 8263 dwellings to 15,573 - at an average of 244 dwellings a year.
- The city will stay compact with continued central city apartment development and an increasing stock of quality medium-density housing options in areas near the city centre and in key suburban centres.
- There will be a wide range of quality housing options that meet the needs of the city’s diverse population.
- This plan’s targets for new housing density types (low: 25 percent; medium: 35 percent; high: 40 percent) are met.
Natural environment

Wellington’s unique natural environment is critically important to the city’s liveability and attractiveness. Its landscape, ecological and recreational values support both health and wellbeing and well-functioning environmental systems. This plan acknowledges the value of our closeness and connection to nature, how this makes Wellington unique, and aims to maximise the benefits of this setting.

One of the best ways of doing this is to keep the city compact by containing development within the city’s existing urban limits. This plan supports the protection of natural features from the impacts of development; enhancement of the city’s green infrastructure (eg parks, open spaces, landscaped areas); and ensuring quality open spaces and recreation opportunities in key locations. In doing this, Wellington will enhance its attractive lifestyle and ability to compete globally for visitors, talented workers and events.

Our natural environment by 2043 - what we plan to happen:

- Our investment in the natural environment and parks keeps pace with the city’s population growth, intensification in existing urban areas, and new housing development in greenfield locations.
- The Outer Green Belt is completed, the harbour escarpment and most of Watts Peninsula (Miramar) are protected and included in our reserves network, and there are more parks and green areas within the central city.
- Our network of open spaces, parks and reserves, the waterfront, harbour and coastline continue to be highly valued by residents and are easily accessible.

- Nature and natural systems are a fundamental part of the city. Indigenous biodiversity and streams will be protected and restored where possible, as outlined in Our Natural Capital. There are more green buildings and an established green infrastructure network across the city.
- The natural environment is an integral part of the city’s sense of place, and provides a range of economic, social and health benefits.
- The environmental impacts of urban development and transport are minimised and new buildings and subdivisions embody sustainable, low-impact urban development principles.
Climate change

Significant and sustained changes to the global climate are being caused by emissions of greenhouse gases from human activity. The impacts of climate change on Wellington over time could include more frequent extreme storms causing flooding, slips and wind damage; changing rainfall patterns and increased temperatures leading to pressures on water supplies and public health; and sea-level rise leading to increased coastal erosion and effects on coastal infrastructure. In response to these risks, the Council developed its first Climate Change Action Plan in 2007 and has been keeping this document up to date since.

Wellington has a head start on the rest of New Zealand in responding to climate change, with a lower carbon footprint due to its compact urban form, higher public transport usage, higher rates of walking and cycling, access to significant renewable energy resources, and a growing creative and knowledge-based, “weightless” economy.

To continue reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and responding to climate change, we will maintain the compactness of our city as our population grows; and invest in our public transport network, footpaths and cycleways to reduce car use and improve travel efficiency. We will continue to encourage low-emission economic development, building efficiency, water conservation and waste reduction.

Climate change by 2043 – what we plan:

- We will maintain and enhance Wellington’s compact urban form. This has significant benefits for our transport network and reducing emissions.
- We achieve the targets set in our 2013 Climate Change Action Plan for the city to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2020 and by 80 percent by 2050, while the Council decreases emissions 40 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050.
- Our transport infrastructure is less reliant on fossil fuels with continued increases in public transport availability and quality, alongside walking and cycling alternatives.
- Our building stock is more energy efficient due to improvements such as better insulation in homes, and more efficient lighting, cooling and heating systems.
- An increasing proportion of the energy we use to power the city’s homes, buildings and transport comes from local renewable sources — wind, solar, tidal and wave energy, as well as biomass energy from waste.
- The city has a comprehensive network of natural assets – parks, gardens, coastline, Town Belt and reserves. These help to support biodiversity and absorb carbon emissions, and form part of Wellington’s green infrastructure.
- We use water more efficiently and minimise waste production.
- We manage the risk of sea-level rise and extreme weather events through mitigation and adaptation, including ensuring infrastructure can cope with these effects.
- Our planning documents reflect the risks associated with climate change, for example, controlling housing and infrastructure development in places susceptible to flooding, and areas prone to slips or coastal erosion.
**Low carbon footprint**

5.8 tonnes
of greenhouse gas emissions in Wellington per person. The city’s emissions are:

- 41.6% stationary
- 34.8% non-aviation transport
- 17.5% aviation transport
- 6.6% other

* Stationary uses are home and business uses not associated with transport

Source: Climate Change Action Plan, 2013, Wellington City Council

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**Open space network**

- 4200 hectares of open space
- 250 parks
- 43 sporting parks
- 330 kilometres of tracks

**Zealandia:** Wellington has strong environmental and conservation links.

Source: Our Capital Spaces, 2013, Wellington City Council
**Tonnes of CO2 emissions**

**Wellington region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>Projected</th>
<th>“High ambition” aim</th>
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<td>2013/14</td>
<td>1,708,456</td>
<td>1,739,825</td>
<td>1,185,920</td>
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<td>2019/20</td>
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The reduction between the emissions expected and aim is 553,905 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

* The “High ambition” aim is not a Council policy, but a possible projection for the region. The Council can look to this as an example of how it could achieve its own, and the city’s, emissions-reduction targets.

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**Projected CO2 emission reduction by sector**

City resilience

Earthquakes are the biggest natural hazard risk and pose significant resilience challenges for Wellington with the city straddling several active fault lines. Wellington is also vulnerable to a range of other natural hazards and climate change related risks. These include severe storms, flooding, landslides, tsunami and sea-level rise. Some hazards are immediate, while others (like sea-level rise) require long-range planning.

In recognition of this, the Council has for the last 20 years invested significantly in strengthening infrastructure and leads the country in ensuring we have a resilient building stock. We have undertaken earthquake resilience assessments for all pre-1976 buildings and continue to work actively with building owners to ensure that buildings are strengthened. We have also pioneered work with key lifeline organisations and with communities to build disaster preparedness.

The need to increase our resilience will be a key influence on the planning and infrastructure investment decisions the Council makes over the next 30 years. Climate change impacts and the predictions of more severe weather events and sea-level rise will have ramifications, particularly for low-lying coastal urban areas.

We will spend a considerable amount on making the city more resilient to earthquakes. This includes strengthening our earthquake-prone buildings in the central city and suburban centres. Our physical infrastructure lifelines (transport, water, wastewater, power supply) will be particularly important, as well as ensuring our social infrastructure is protected.

The city’s resilience by 2043 – what we plan to happen:

- Ongoing investment in buildings and key infrastructure, and the adoption of new urban development approaches and technologies mean the city’s buildings and transport network is increasingly resilient to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change.

- Land use and development in areas most at risk from the impacts of natural hazards and climate change is managed to minimise the risks to people and property.

- The completed Roads of National Significance projects improve access to and from the city in case of emergency.
Earthquake strengthened: Ombra on Cuba Street.
### Decreasing fuel usage in Wellington

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Litres per person per year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>1062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>1027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Sales data submitted to Wellington City Council, 2014

### Wellington City residents who take a car into the central city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% residents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Wellington City residents commuting to the central city per week (2013)

- **17.3%** walked or jogged
- **3.5%** bicycle
- **13.8%** public bus
- **3%** train
- **43.5%** motor vehicle (car, truck, passenger, motorbike)
- **19%** other (worked at home, did not go to work, did not answer)

Source: ID, 2014
Transport and movement

Having a high-quality transport system is key to Wellington’s economic, environmental and social success and must be considered in an integrated way.

Wellington is relatively well-placed to face the transport challenges of the next 50 years. The city is compact, many people work in the central city, and we have a comparatively young, educated population who have demonstrated they are open to change. We have a good public transport system, and car ownership is relatively low by national standards. Walking as a transport mode is very high (17 percent of journeys to work) by national and international standards. There has also been a large recent rise in the number of people cycling despite a lack of supporting infrastructure, with a 73 percent increase in residents cycling to work.

Wellington continues to move towards being a more sustainable city, supported by our changing transport choices. This plan recognises the important role our public transport system plays in moving people to (from the wider region) and around the city. It also recognises the planned transport improvements that are being made across the city, and the opportunities for emerging technologies such as electric vehicles. Capitalising on these investments, as well as fostering the development of active modes - walking and cycling - will be key to the city’s future success.

Our transport network by 2043 - what we plan to happen:

- The bus priority network is implemented.
- The proportion of people walking and cycling continues to increase supported by a comprehensive cycling network and ongoing improvements to pedestrian access.
- There is an ongoing reduction in the number of pedestrian and cycle injuries.
- The Great Harbour Way provides cyclists with a continuous cycle route from Lower Hutt to the city.
- Our network of parks and open spaces is an integral part of the commuters’ network for walking and cycling.
- The Wellington Roads of National Significance projects are completed in a way that maximises benefits to the city by freeing up local road space for public transport, cycling, walking and local vehicles. Projects within the city include Transmission Gully, Ngauranga to Aotea Quay traffic management improvements, Terrace Tunnel duplication, Tunnel to Tunnel improvements, and Airport to Mt Victoria Tunnel (including Mt Victoria Tunnel duplication).
- The road network provides good access to the port, the airport and for freight.
- The public transport system uses low-carbon technologies and there is a significant number of private electric vehicles on the roads.
Infrastructure

Infrastructure underpins everything the city does. Having high-quality, reliable infrastructure is critical to our economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing and is fundamental to Wellington being a successful city. It is also the biggest area of Council spending. It is therefore important for this investment to provide value to ratepayers and maximise benefits to the city.

The city’s projected population growth, and new housing and commercial development over the next 30 years, will require new and upgraded infrastructure. A significant advantage of being a compact city is that infrastructure is cheaper to provide and operate than in more spread out cities. In the northern greenfield areas where there is little or no existing infrastructure, developers will fund the necessary works. Existing infrastructure in urban areas also requires continual upgrade and renewal, particularly in areas where development is planned and more people will be living or working.

The growing frequency of natural hazards will also place increasing pressure on infrastructure, both to withstand the actual event (for example, earthquakes and storms), as well as being able to return to operation quickly after an event. Targeting investment to ensure resilience of critical infrastructure will be a key focus.

The infrastructure by 2043 - what we plan to happen:

- The resilience of the city’s infrastructure increases through targeted investment in strategic locations and critical networks.
- Our investment in public infrastructure keeps pace with the city’s population growth and new housing development (especially along the growth spine, other suburban growth areas and in greenfield growth areas).
- We work collaboratively with utilities providers to coordinate growth and its impact on effective service supply.

Wellington City GDP size

Source: Infometrics, 2013 and BERL Economics, 2014
Economy and employment

How the city develops - its urban form - is a critical factor in maximising economic potential. Our compact layout, central city density and close proximity to major commercial centres - coupled with high-quality transport links (including sea and air connections) - provide a distinct competitive advantage for Wellington.

How we plan for and manage growth through this plan will help maximise economic benefits, whilst also ensuring environmental and social benefits. Ensuring the efficient use of land and providing development capacity in the right locations are central to this goal.

Wellington is the economic heart of the region, generating around two-thirds of the region’s gross domestic product (GDP), much of it in the geographically small central city. As such, much of the city’s employment is clustered in this area.

The city’s projected population growth will help support economic development and the creation of employment opportunities. This plan identifies investment priorities in key locations to stimulate growth.

Our economy and employment by 2043 - what we plan to happen:

- The Council’s approach to managing growth and development ensures the immediate and long-term economic vitality of the city.
- The central city continues to be the economic, social and cultural hub of the city and wider region.
- The city’s suburban centres and other business areas help support economic growth.
Māori heritage and partnership

Māori whānau, hāpu and iwi are an important part of the city’s history and unique identity. They are also important partners in delivering on the long-term cultural, social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the city.

It is important that the heritage of tangata whenua, Māori culture and traditions are protected and incorporated into the development of the city through the actions identified in this plan.

Māori heritage and partnership by 2043 – what we plan to happen:

- Iwi are involved in the development of the city and work in partnerships with the Council and others to help deliver on actions and projects.
- Sites of historical importance to Māori are identified and acknowledged.
- Public spaces, buildings, artworks and events provide opportunities to reflect the city’s relationship with Māori.
- The provisions of plans and policies such as the District Plan support the protection of Māori historic heritage, culture and traditions, and reflect the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Historic heritage and character

Wellingtonians value highly the city’s unique heritage and character. The city’s rich and diverse historic heritage includes buildings and structures, sites, townscapes, streetscapes, landscapes and other historical places. We value them as features in the city’s landscape and appreciate both their natural and human-made elements.

Wellington’s built heritage is a precious and finite resource and is important in shaping the character of the central city and suburbs. It is part of what makes Wellington unique and attractive. Built heritage also plays a significant role within our economy: through direct employment, providing retail and commercial spaces, and as a focus for advertising and tourism.

The plan recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing elements that help give Wellington its sense of place – the compact, walkable nature of the city, its suburban villages, its heritage buildings and objects, character areas, and Māori heritage values and sites.

Our historic heritage and character by 2043 – what we plan to happen:

- Growth and development of the city values and enhances the key elements that form part of Wellington’s unique identity and character.
- The legacy of the past is recognised through the appropriate identification, protection, conservation and use of the city’s significant cultural and historic heritage.
- All current earthquake-prone heritage buildings have had their earthquake-prone status resolved through investment in strengthening and sensitive redevelopment.
- We continue to protect and enhance the special character of our suburbs, particularly the highly valued existing character of our inner city suburbs such as Thorndon, Mt Victoria, Aro Valley, Newtown, Mt Cook and Berhampore.
- We support initiatives to build even greater ‘sense of place’ in Wellington’s diverse communities.
Wellington's urban growth over time

Development to 1900
Development to 1930
Development to 1970
Development to 2010