

# The District Plan

<https://eplan.wellington.govt.nz/draft/>

*Note: If you don't want to read the whole plan, there is an overview in the Council papers here*

<https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/your-council/meetings/committees/puuroro-aamua---planning-and-environment-committee/2021-10-20-agenda-papec.pdf>

**Launch event. You do need to register for this.**

## Have your say on our city's future

5.45PM-7.45PM, MON 1 NOV | ONLINE

We invite you to join us virtually for the launch of [Our City Tomorrow](#). This November, Wellington City Council and Let's Get Wellington Moving are launching three exciting plans that will transform how we live, invigorate our city, and create attractive transport choices that help to reduce our carbon emissions. This event marks the start of citywide engagement. [Register for the online event here.](#)

(The link can be found on the WCC website)

<https://wellington.govt.nz/Have-Your-Say/Consultations/Our-City-Tomorrow>

- Launch event Monday 1 November 5.30-7.30pm
- Public Trust Hall Thorndon Wednesday 3 November 4pm – 7.30pm
- Loaves and Fishes Tawa Thursday 4 November 4pm – 7.30pm Tawa Community Centre
- Miramar Wednesday 10 November 4pm – 7.30pm Miramar Community Centre
- Ngaio Thursday 11 November 4pm – 7.30pm Ngaio Town Hall
- Eastern suburbs Saturday 13 November 11am - 3pm ASB Sports Centre
- Johnsonville Tuesday 16 November 4pm – 7.30pm Johnsonville Community Centre – Trust Room
- Karori Wednesday 17 November 4pm – 7.30pm Karori Community Centre
- Island Bay Thursday 18 November 4pm - 7.30pm Baptist Church
- Newtown Saturday 20 November 11am – 3pm Salvation Army Centre
- Central city Saturday 27 November 11am – 3pm Prefab Hall

The Communications and Engagement Plan includes:

- An insert with rates notices informing all ratepayers of the Draft District Plan consultation.
- A 'roadshow' with 10 drop-in sessions across the City.
- A 'friend of submitter' who will be available to assist people with making submissions on the draft plan.
- A significant social media and online presence through the Council's social media channels and the Planning for Growth website.
- A set of information sheets on the key topic areas that enables people to easily understand the key changes in the draft plan.

Following the consultation period, there will be an opportunity in early 2022 for submitters to present their submission to the Council and discuss their ideas with other submitters.

**(Views from discussions with other Residents' Groups...these cover the whole spectrum from supportive to furious)**

## Inner City

Wellington Heritage week opened with this panel discussion about a definition of "Heritage". It's a really wide topic and has perspectives from all sides. <https://wellingtonheritageweek.co.nz/event/festival-opening-panel-talk/>

- Marko Garlick - Generation Zero;
- Cr Tamatha Paul - Wellington City Council;
- Jane O'Loughlin - Live Wellington;
- James Solari - Solari Architects & Urban Development Institute (UDINZ); and
- Stuart Niven - Stuart Niven Urban Design.

- Q Since the Government are saying they'll allow 3 dwellings of 3 stories on any section, is the DP relevant?
- Q The announcement of that policy didn't seem to say anything about design or light requirements. Is there no protection for sunshine or sun for solar panels? Even for newbuilds 2 hours is considered ok no matter what time of day.
- A My understanding is that is exactly what the District Plan is for because that is where such details are regulated - so definitely relevant. The Government policy sets the broader parameters within which Local Government sets the rules. I'm sure you will get your question properly addressed though in the presentation from WCC.

### **Newtown RA**

'LiveWellington - a liveable city by design'. A group of interested people have been forming a group to campaign for an alternative approach to increased density - the 'mission statement' is attached - it might still be edited a little before the organisation launches but the key messages are there.

I have been part of the planning group. We want to support Residents' Associations and others with making submissions, and to help with this we are putting together some summary documents about the Plan, its main points and problem areas, etc. It would be good to hear what people would find most helpful. If Associations would like LiveWellington members to come to meetings to discuss the issues that is definitely a possibility.

The official launch is planned for **4pm on Sunday 14th November, at Mt Cook School Hall**. By then there should be a website to give the group a public presence. We'll send out more information soon.

### **Oriental Bay RA**

<https://wellington.scoop.co.nz/?p=140027>

.....The Chair of the Committee (Councillor Pannett) achieved majority support for several important amendments, including the emerging issue of light in residential dwellings, the lack of which Deputy Mayor Free described as "dystopian and scary" notwithstanding the urgent need for housing.

Council staff reported that the government envisages a one metre square light well will be sufficient for habitable rooms, something Councillor Young was worried would provide no more than sufficient light for "lab rats". Council staff reassured councillors that they were "doing more work" on issues relating to access to light for mental health.

An amendment highlighting the need for water permeability of developed sites (in order to limit stormwater run off) was successful, as was the proposal to consider long standing public view shafts within the city.

Deputy Mayor Free moved a successful amendment to encourage talks with the Airport aimed at getting a public access road reinstated through airport land.

Other amendments failed to get the necessary votes. They included one on waste minimisation in building activity (responding to the problem that developments produce on average more than 4 tons of waste material), something of particular concern to Councillor Foon.

An innovative proposal by Councillor Pannett, to introduce neighbourhood planning (in order for the Council to work with communities on the impact of density in their areas), was voted against by a majority made up of Labour Councillors (Fitzsimons, Matthews, Day and O'Neil), Councillors Paul, Condie, Rush and new Ngati Toa Councillor Liz Kelly. Councillor Fitzsimons said that neighbourhood planning would give residents "too much power" to stop housing, and give people "false hope about the power they had" to alter density decisions.

Council staff noted that the [government's announcement](#) the day before the meeting, will mean changes will need to be made to the Draft District Plan, but that will happen after consultation. Those changes relate to the new mandatory requirement to allow all developments in all residential zones of 3 new buildings per property, each of up to 3 storeys in height, (Medium Density Residential Standards MDRS).

While that new deregulation is not yet incorporated into the Draft, a guidance note will advise the public about the issue. The new MDRS will cover half the entire area of Wellington.

The government is expected to pass the MDRS legislation before the end of this year, and in the meantime the public will be consulted on Wellington's Draft District Plan which implements the National Policy Statement on

Urban Development (NPS-UD). The NPS-UD contains the requirement for mandatory deregulation of height limits (to at least six storeys) within a walkable distance of the CBD boundaries, and all mass rapid transit (MRT) stops – either planned or existing. Council staff explained that “walkability” was determined by the average fit person, not by someone pushing a pram or who could not climb steps.

Council staff reported that the MRT stops in southern and eastern suburbs will not however be identified until late next year (after LGWM has made plans post-consultation on routes etc). So an amendment to the District Plan is already envisaged to be necessary after its finalised next year – to upzone the areas around those MRT stops (in Newtown, Berhampore, Island Bay, Hataitai etc).

Councillors asked a number of important questions at the meeting.

Mayor Foster asked how many new dwellings are theoretically possible under the NPS-UD upzoning in the Draft District Plan plus the government’s new announcement of 3 times 3 storeys everywhere? Council staff were unable to answer that, but it seemed like it would be an enormous number. That results from the NPS-UD having required Wellington to make room for more than 100,000 new dwellings.

So it’s likely that the new District Plan will “enable” hundreds of thousands of new dwellings. The approach is designed to bring down the price of land and provide affordable housing for all, which a similar approach has not achieved in Australia.

Council staff answered Councillors’ questions about the design guides for developers that are included in the Draft District Plan. The design guides take a light touch, to allow for architects to be creative they said.

If developers contribute to city outcomes (eg include affordable units) they will get extra “points” and be allowed to build higher than the height limits. So height limits won’t necessarily be limiting.

Council staff explained that the government’s new MDRS will have recession planes measured from 6 meters above ground. In Wellington’s operative District Plan, this is currently only 2.5 metres in residential areas. So there could be big walls next to existing houses. Councillor Fitzsimons said “she had “been consistently clear” to those worried “that not everybody is going to have the same light in their homes in the next 5 years ... as they do now”.

Several citizens made presentations to Councillors, noting that the proposed SNAs (Significant Natural Areas) were illegal, discriminatory and did not accurately reflect the legal definition of areas of significant biodiversity. In some cases, they said, SNAs were proposed for patches of green in citizens’ gardens. That is also likely to be a controversial issue in the consultation, although Councillor Rush thought it might just be “a storm in a teacup”.

Several Councillors called for “overwhelming submissions.”

### **LC from Newlands**

1. The District plan contains far more densification than was proposed in the Spatial Plan before that fateful council meeting. I would estimate double the densification in our local suburbs, in particular the height limits in Ngaio and Khandallah with good design brownie points are not 6 stories, but 21 metres plus the 25-49% design guide bonus, ie. up to 10 stories, and of course the walkable catchments were increased, too.
2. Nobody should be under any illusion that affordable housing will be created in my local suburbs, the average price of a 3-bedroom, single bathroom property across all of Wellington is now \$1.3m - for us it is well north of that (data courtesy of Paul Anderson, Tommys).
3. This high-density development will result in huge carbon emissions, firstly from all the steel and concrete used, and as they are premium priced and less than half the residents will work in the City centre (only 30% do now), the roads will be jammed with traffic, and as the obliterator thinks cars will emit carbon forever, so that means even more emissions.

4. The Johnsonville Railway Line has now been advertised as having the capacity to support the growth, but that's not true, unless the new residents and the current residents and the additional residents the government is creating remain in lockdown, otherwise they will have to drive. The real figures show that there is not enough rail or bus capacity to meet the growth and nor is it in the plans. So that makes the Johnsonville railway neither high capacity, nor fast, nor frequent so with the unreliability due to frequent bus replacements, how is it an NPS-UD RTS?
5. We have no idea whether the infrastructure supports the additional growth, which remains undeclared as the DP still has the old growth projections in it despite the huge increase in buildable volume.
6. The SNAs encroach heavily into properties in our suburbs, which is an unacceptable and completely unnecessary intrusion on private property rights, when what we need is for the councils to properly look after the huge areas of SNAs in their reserves.

#### ....LGWM

1. Where did the great idea to send the MRT to Island Bay come from? Surely there is more traffic and more residents out East towards the airport (I haven't done the calculations)? The local RAs should be aware that once the MRT is approved, the District Plan will be revised to make that transport corridor high density within a ten-minute walkable catchment (unless the eye of Sauron moves south and requires 15-minute walkable catchments).
2. LGWM is actually preventing itself - the bus capacity along the new golden mile layout is only 240 buses in the morning commute and yet their growth and mode shift promises require it to be 617 buses!
3. Where is the data to support the proposals in the LGWM consultations? We need to see current transport mode peak usage and capacity and forecasts of future mode usage and capacity to have a credible plan. Personally I am a two-lanes to the planes person, as it takes two hours to go by bus from the airport to home on a Saturday afternoon.

#### ....Cycleways

1. Let's not stay locked in a 20th century view of transport. Nor expect the public sector to predict the transport market, let alone let politicians impose their marketing skills on us! Only 3% of commuters go by cycle to work from our suburbs. While we build narrow cycle tracks, mostly with paint, the large European cities like Paris and London are embracing quadricycles. These are cheap, safer, dry, go up hills, can be rented by the hour like e-scooters, or leased, are drivable without a car licence by young people, have zero emissions and look cool as - they are the future of transport and they fit Wellington like a hand in glove. There's a picture of the Citroen Ami quadricycle below. (We'll need wider cycleways, or maybe they should share the bus lanes.)
2. The cycleway up the Onslow Road is impossible - we have asked for a footpath and there's barely room for that, but no, we can't have one. You have to dodge the traffic to walk to the bus stop.

#### Owhiro Bay RA

Coming from a very different perspective is Bernard Hickey. He is well worth listening to. It is the Three Stories and Rising episode from his excellent When The Facts Change podcast.

[https://listen.stitcher.com/yvap/?af\\_dp=stitcher://episode/87696944&af\\_web\\_dp=https://www.stitcher.com/episode/87696944&deep\\_link\\_value=stitcher://episode/87696944](https://listen.stitcher.com/yvap/?af_dp=stitcher://episode/87696944&af_web_dp=https://www.stitcher.com/episode/87696944&deep_link_value=stitcher://episode/87696944)