



greater WELLINGTON  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

# Regional Form

## Draft Provisions for the Regional Policy Statement

Working draft

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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## 1. Introduction

Good regional form is about the physical arrangement of urban and rural communities and how they link together. A well-configured and compact community enhances the quality of life for residents and businesses. It's easier to get around, transport costs are lower and suitable housing is available. Each community not only looks good, but also works well and is cohesive. People are proud of belonging.

There are economic spin-offs from having well configured cities. For example, there are direct correlations between allowing higher density housing near city centres and increased productivity. Less time spent travelling means more time for work and leisure. Good transport connections are an essential ingredient of business success and are an investment priority.

*The good thing for the region is that it stacks up well by international standards.*

In 2006 Wellington City came 12th in the Mercer Consulting world wide quality of living survey involving 350 cities.

But it's not just Wellington City. One of the region's greatest attractions is its diversity. There are few places in the world able to mix stunning harbours with cosmopolitan city centres and easy access to coasts, countryside and mountains. Not only is it possible to prosper financially, it is also possible to have a great quality of life. And there is a wide choice of living options including inner city apartments, homes with expansive gardens, rural lifestyles, vineyards and extensive pastoral farms.

If we are to achieve sustainable economic growth, we must continue to look after both business and the physical form of the region.

*“For most people ‘good regional form’ represents the things that contribute to our quality of life – efficient transport, well designed cities and so on. But it’s more than that. Good regional form makes smart commercial sense.”*

Marcus Spiller Director SGS Planning and Economics Melbourne

## 2. Issues

### 2.1 Issue 1: Sporadic and uncoordinated development

Uncoordinated and sporadic development and new, or upgraded, infrastructure can adversely affect the region's compact form. In the Wellington region this can amongst other things, result in:

- inefficient use of land
- insufficient densities to support public transport
- the potential for big box retail and commercial developments to occur in locations that undermine existing centres
- the encroachment of new activities into established areas, particularly industrial based employment areas, in a manner that undermines the significant resource provided by these areas; and
- increased traffic congestion.
- development poorly located in relation to infrastructure such as roads, sewage and stormwater systems

#### Description

While the region must provide development and redevelopment opportunities, it is important to recognise the potential adverse effects of uncoordinated and sporadic development, and of new and upgraded infrastructure on the region's compact form.

The region's compact form is based on a very strong corridor pattern, starting from the airport to the south, proceeding to the Wellington City Central Business District and then branching into a 'Y'. The two branches are the western corridor through Porirua to the Kapiti Coast, and the eastern corridor up the Hutt Valley and through the Wairarapa. Many of the region's centres are located on or close to these corridors.

This corridor pattern is a real strength for the region. It reinforces local centres, supports passenger transport, reduces the costs of energy use and makes services more accessible.

The region's compact form also features key centres such as the central business district in Wellington City, sub-regional centres and key industrial based employment locations. These existing centres are regionally significant resources, which are key focal points for economic and community activity. Uncoordinated and sporadic development has the potential to undermine these resources through the establishment of new centres and the encroachment of inappropriate new activities within existing centres.

The value of the region's compact form and the potential adverse effects on it are recognised as being of regional importance in the Wellington Regional Strategy.

## **2.2 Issue 2: Quality urban design**

Attention to quality urban design can improve public amenity, enhance the region's connectivity and the relationship between urban form and transport, increase the range of housing choice, facilitate economic and community development and reduce environment impacts, including impacts on the natural or physical characteristics of places in the region.

### **Description**

The design of our urban environments is undertaken at a wide range of scales, from regional strategies such as the Wellington Regional Strategy and the Regional Land Transport Strategy down to the design of individual streets, parks or buildings. An equally wide range of actors influence the urban design process, including the public, developers, politicians, engineers, ecologists, architects and planners.

Quality urban design seeks to bring together these different actors to create places that work for people and the environment, places in which people can live, work and play and places that will be both used and valued. International research on the value of quality urban design has shown that it generates significant community benefits including economic development, accessibility, health and well-being, social cohesion and inclusiveness and reduced impacts on the environment.

Attention to quality urban design is identified as being of regional importance in the Wellington Regional Strategy.

## **2.3 Issue 3: Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure**

Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure provides essential services and facilities that support the nation's and the region's social and economic wellbeing. Such infrastructure can be adversely affected when incompatible or inappropriate land uses occur under, over, on, or alongside.

### **Description**

The Wellington region contains a large amount of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure including:

- The Strategic Transport Network as defined in the draft Regional Land Transport Strategy 2006 (excluding the strategic local roads)
- The National Electricity Grid
- The regional bulk water supply network
- Wellington Airport

- Port Wellington; and
- The Wellington, Kenepuru, Hutt and Masterton hospitals.

This infrastructure is a significant physical resource, necessary to enable people and communities (including future generations) to meet their economic and social wellbeing. However, while the adverse impacts and reverse sensitivity issues of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure are felt locally, often the benefits of this infrastructure are felt elsewhere.

Land use activities which occur under, over, on, or alongside nationally and regionally significant infrastructure can adversely affect the operation of this infrastructure. These adverse effects can occur both directly and indirectly through reverse sensitivity effects, and may reduce the benefit of the infrastructure to the nation and / or region.

## 2.4 Issue 4: Housing Choice

The lack of housing choice across the region limits opportunities to:

- Improve access to employment opportunities
- Enhance community networks; and
- Reduce travel demand.

### Description

The range of housing choice within the region has the potential to significantly affect the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety.

Currently the range of housing stock available in many areas of the region is limited. Good housing choice is generally available for lifestyle and lower density settlement forms, however medium and higher density options, and one or two bedroom homes are limited beyond the Wellington CBD, and within walking distance of public transit.

The current housing choice does not fully recognise changing household sizes, the ageing population and changing lifestyle choices within the region. As such it limits the region's ability to adapt to these changes.

The lack of housing choice also reduces the ability of the region's people and communities to provide for their immediate economic and social wellbeing. For example, older people face limited housing choices in many areas of the region, forcing them to use retirement homes, stay in larger homes, or move out of their communities. These choices can cause isolation and can be costly.

Equally the lack of housing choice across the region and particularly at community centres and public transport nodes can generate higher transportation demands and associated living costs. It can also limit business development opportunities if poor housing choice reduces the ability to attract and retain a workforce with appropriate skills.

### **3. Objectives**

#### **3.1 Objective 1: Urban design principles**

Urban development, including the development of infrastructure, which is consistent with the region's urban design principles.

#### **3.2 Objective 2: Compact regional form**

Urban development, including the development of infrastructure that reinforces the region's compact form and supports the:

- Regional Central Business District
- Sub-regional centres; and the
- Change Areas.

#### **3.3 Objective 3: Regional CBD and sub-regional centres**

A regional central business district in Wellington city and sub-regional centres (listed below) that are viable and vibrant:

- Masterton town centre
- Upper Hutt city centre
- Hutt city centre
- Petone
- Kilbirnie
- Johnsonville
- Porirua city centre; and
- Paraparaumu town centre.

#### **3.4 Objective 4: Key centres and public transport nodes**

Higher density mixed-use activities within and around key centres and public transport nodes that support walking, cycling, and public transport.

#### **3.5 Objective 5: Industrial based employment locations**

There are sufficient industrial-based employment locations to meet the region's needs.

#### **3.6 Objective 6: Rural residential development**

Strategically planned rural-residential development that:

Improves the range of housing and lifestyle options within the region and within specific districts / cities; and

Either:

Future proofs areas for later urban use by excluding rural residential or ensuring rural residential is designed to enable long term adaptability; or



Uses rural residential development as a mechanism to define the edge of urban areas; and

Takes advantage of the potential environmental benefits and manages the potential adverse effects of rural residential development, including reverse sensitivity issues; and

Ensures that unsustainable demand for new or upgraded infrastructure is not created; and

Implements best practice rural design principles.

### **3.7 Objective 7: Quality open space network**

The management of the regions public open space network is integrated.

### **3.8 Objective 8: Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure**

The social and economic benefits of existing and proposed nationally and regionally significant infrastructure are recognised.

### **3.9 Objective 9: Efficient use of infrastructure**

Land use and development that encourages efficient use of existing infrastructure.

### **3.10 Objective 10: Housing choice**

A range and choice of housing that meets the needs of the region's communities.

## **4. Anticipated Environmental Results**

The following anticipated environmental results are to be achieved prior to the next review of the Regional Policy Statement

### **4.1 AER 1: Urban design principles**

(a) The region's city and district councils and the regional council have signed the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and prepared a joint action plan for the Wellington region.

(b) The percentage of residents satisfied with the quality of the urban environments in the region has increased.

### **4.2 AER 2: Compact regional form**

(a) The average population density of land zoned for urban purposes does not decline.

(b) XXXX percent of all building development (by number of new buildings) occurs within land zoned for urban purposes as at 1 January 2007.

- (c) A regional structure planning guide has been prepared jointly by Greater Wellington and the regions city and district councils.

#### **4.3 AER 3: Regional CBD and sub regional centres**

- (a) The range of commercial activity within the Wellington central business district and each sub-regional centre is increased.
- (b) The public perception about the look and feel of the Wellington central business district and the following sub-regional centres is increased:
- Masterton town centre;
  - Upper Hutt city centre;
  - Hutt city centre;
  - Petone;
  - Kilbirnie;
  - Johnsonville;
  - Porirua city centre; and
  - Paraparaumu town centre.

#### **4.4 AER 4: Key centres and public transport nodes**

- (a) City and district councils identify those key centres and public transport nodes able to accommodate higher density activities.
- (b) The number of people living in and within walking distances of key centres and transport nodes is increased.
- (c) The range of commercial activity located within key centres and transport nodes is increased.

#### **4.5 AER 5: Industrial based employment locations**

- (a) A study of the factors affecting the supply and demand of industrial based employment areas is undertaken.
- (b) Sufficient industrial based employment areas are available within the region.

#### **4.6 AER 6: Rural residential development**

- (a) Principles for the location and design of rural residential are development and implemented.

#### **4.7 AER for Objective 7: Open Space network**

- (a) Major gaps and opportunities to improve regional integration of public open spaces is completed.

#### **4.8 AER for Objective 8: Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure**

- (a) The social and economic benefits of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure are recognised in resource management decision making.

#### **4.9 AER for Objective 9: Efficient use of infrastructure**

- (a) Provision of funding for infrastructure is considered in resource management decision making.

#### **4.10 AER's for Objective 10: Housing choice**

- (a) The range of housing choices is increased in all cities and districts of the region.
- (b) The percentage of residents satisfied with the range of housing choices in the region is increased.

### **5. Policies**

#### **5.1 Policy 1: Urban design principles – district and regional plans**

District and regional plans and the Regional Land Transport Strategy shall include provisions to promote consistency with the region's urban design principles (see section 8) for urban development, upgrade to existing infrastructure, and the development of new infrastructure.

Explanation:

Policy 1 requires district and regional plans and the Regional Land Transport Strategy to include provisions to promote the use of the region's urban design principles for urban development and infrastructure.

The region's urban design principles are based on the seven design qualities described in the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. In this regard the region's urban design principles seek to ensure that development gives consideration to the following design elements:

- Context
- Character
- Choice
- Connections
- Creativity
- Custodianship
- Collaboration

It is important to note the region's urban design principles do not only focus on the quality of the built elements of the region's urban areas. They also focus on the how urban development integrates with the natural elements of urban

areas and on the application of low impact urban design solutions (see in particular the design principles relating to “character” and “custodianship”).

To reflect matters of particular interest to the Wellington region, the region’s urban design principles include some minor amendments from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. These changes recognise:

- the need for the integration of land use and transport systems as part of the urban design quality “context”
- the importance of quality open spaces to the urban design quality “character”; and
- that under urban design quality “character”, inspiring architecture, spaces and places should be created only where appropriate.

International research on the value of quality urban design has shown that it generates significant community benefits including economic development, accessibility, health and well-being, social cohesion and inclusiveness and reduced impacts on the environment. Attention to quality urban design is identified as being of regional importance in the Wellington Regional Strategy.

The term infrastructure has the same definition as that included in section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

## **5.2 Policy 2: Urban design principles – resource consents and notice of requirements**

When considering applications for resource consents or notices of requirement for urban development, upgrade of existing infrastructure or the development of new infrastructure, local authorities shall have particular regard to the region’s urban design principles (see section 8).

Explanation:

Policy 2 requires city and district councils and the regional council to assess resource consent applications and notices of requirement for urban development against the region’s urban design principles. While discretion is retained as to how the principles are applied in each case, the policy recognises that, for reasons of effectiveness, it is important that their application is required rather than simply encouraged.

The term infrastructure has the same definition as that included in section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

## **5.3 Policy 3: Urban design principles and low impact design solutions**

Greater Wellington and the region’s city and district councils will work together to implement and promote urban design principles and the use of low impact urban design solutions.

#### Explanation:

Policy 3 seeks to promote the use of urban design principles and low impact urban design solutions in the Wellington region.

By including reference to the urban design principles, policy 3 recognises that the promotion of these principles through non-regulatory means provides an appropriate complementary mechanism to the regulatory based approaches required in policies 1 and 2.

Policy 3 also recognises that environmental benefits can be obtained through the application of low impact urban design solutions. In general, low-impact urban design solutions comprise design and development practices that utilise natural systems and low-impact technologies. The focus is on water management and includes key elements such as working with nature, avoiding or minimising impervious surfaces, minimising earthworks in construction, and utilising vegetation to assist in trapping sediment and pollutants.

The specifics of low-impact design and how these might appropriately be applied within the Wellington region are still being developed. For this reason policy 3 seeks a collaborative approach by the Regional Council and the region's city and district councils to further define low impact design solutions and promote their use in the Wellington region.

The promotion of low impact design solutions may be achieved, for example, through guidance material, subdivision and land development codes of practices or district plan provisions.

#### 5.4 Policy 4: Structure planning

District plans shall include provisions that:

- define what constitutes a significant urban development proposal for that district; and
- require structure plans to be provided for significant urban development proposals;

so as to ensure integrated and high quality development.

#### Explanation:

Policy 4 recognises the significant role that structure planning plays in preventing sporadic and uncoordinated development and the erosion of the region's compact form. For this reason the policy requires district plans to include provisions which require that structure plans be produced for all significant urban development.

What constitutes a significant urban development will vary depending on the character and context of the city or district within which it is located. For this reason policy 4 requires the region's district and city councils to define, in their district plans, what constitutes a significant urban development.

The content and detail of structure plans will vary depending on the development scale at which they are targeted. Notwithstanding this, structure plans commonly address:

- development staging;
- the integration of existing and proposed infrastructure services;
- connections to existing and proposed transportation systems;
- the provision of an appropriate mix of land uses and land use densities;
- the integration of the development with adjoining land use activities; and
- the methods proposed implementation of the region's urban design principles.

A regional guide will be prepared to provide detailed direction on the content of structure plans (see method 3).

#### **5.5 Policy 5: Land-use activities within the regional CBD and sub-regional centres**

District plans shall include provisions that encourage a range of land use activities within the Wellington central business district and the following sub-regional centres:

- Masterton town centre
- Upper Hutt city centre
- Hutt city centre
- Petone
- Kilbirnie
- Johnsonville
- Porirua city centre; and
- Paraparaumu town centre.

Explanation:

Policy 5 recognises that centres containing a range of activities are likely to be more resilient in the face of change, offer greater employment opportunities and housing choice, contribute to reduced travel demand and be more vibrant and inclusive focal points for community activity.

Research has also shown that the complexity and relative sophistication of businesses in centres is an important indicator and factor in increasing GDP per capita. At present, the region's sub-regional centres can be described as being relatively 'immature'. By that, it is meant that the range of uses is fairly simple, with a heavy reliance on retail and civic activity.

Policy 5 requires the inclusion of district plan provisions that encourage a range of land uses in the regional CBD and sub-regional centres. To give

effect to this policy district and city councils will need to determine whether the provisions should:

- Enable mixed land use in the centres,
- Restrict the mix of land uses elsewhere; or
- Combine both approaches.

Key activities that should be encouraged in centres by district plans include:

- Retail trade
- Visitor accommodation, cafes and restaurants
- Higher density residential development
- Communication services
- Finance and insurance
- Property and business services
- Government administration
- Health and community services
- Cultural and recreation services
- Personal and other services
- Education facilities.

The region's Central Business District in Wellington City and the sub regional centres have been included in policy 5 because these centres are identified as being of regional significance in the Wellington Regional Strategy. It is noted that numerous other centres exist throughout the region which have local significance.

## **5.6 Policy 6: Key centres and public transport nodes**

District plans shall include provisions that identify key centres and public transport nodes where higher density development is to be encouraged in that district, then encourage higher density development at these sites.

**Explanation:**

Policy 6 requires the inclusion of provisions which encourage higher density residential development at the region's key centres and public transport nodes. In doing so it recognises the benefit of increasing densities at key centres and transport nodes in terms of reinforcing the region's compact form, and enhancing viability and vibrancy of these locations.

Policy 6 also recognises that higher density development should only be encouraged in manner that is consistent with the region's urban design principles. Determining where to encourage higher densities and what the appropriate density is must involve consideration of the context and character of each location. For this reason, policy 6 does not identify where, or at what density, higher density activities should be encouraged. Instead, the policy requires the region's district and city councils to determine these matters in their district plans.

## **5.7 Policy 7: Industrial based employment locations**

District plans shall include provisions that identify key industrial based employment locations in that district and protect these areas from reverse sensitivity effects arising from non-industrial activities.

Explanation:

Policy 7 seeks to protect the region's key industrial based employment locations. In doing so it recognises that ensuring adequate land is available for industrial based employment is important to the on-going prosperity of the region, and that where this land is located has the potential to affect the integrity of the region's compact form.

Evidence collected for the Wellington Regional Strategy suggests that many non-industrial uses are currently locating in the region's established industrial centres. These non-industrial uses include big box retail, wholesaling activities, showrooms, offices and residential activities. Their introduction into industrial centres has the effect of increasing land demand and land values in those areas, leading to land values which are uneconomic for industrial activities. This factor, in addition to the sensitivities of non-industrial activities to the effects of industrial activities can lead to the displacement of industrial activities from the established industrial centres.

The effect of this displacement is two-fold. First, the efficiencies that are gained from a critical mass of business in these established locations may be lost. Second, new land areas will need to be found to accommodate the displaced uses. These new areas are likely to be located on the fringe of existing urban areas and therefore may challenge the region's compact form and are unlikely to be as strategically located as the established areas.

In the long term, it is expected that demand for industrial land will decline in the Wellington region. Consequently new industrial areas established to accommodate short to medium term demand, and located in less strategic locations, are likely to create long term oversupply issues and associated inefficiencies in the use of land.

While, for the reasons stated above, protecting existing industrial based employment locations is important, not all existing areas warrant protection. For example the location of some established centres may mean that it is more beneficial if they are in alternative use. This determination needs to be made on a case by case basis considering the significance of the industrial centre and its local context. Policy 7 therefore provides for the region's district and city councils to determine, in their district plans, which industrial centres should be protected.

## **5.8 Policy 8: Managing development of Change Areas**

City and district councils and the regional council will work together to manage development within the following regionally significant "Change Areas":



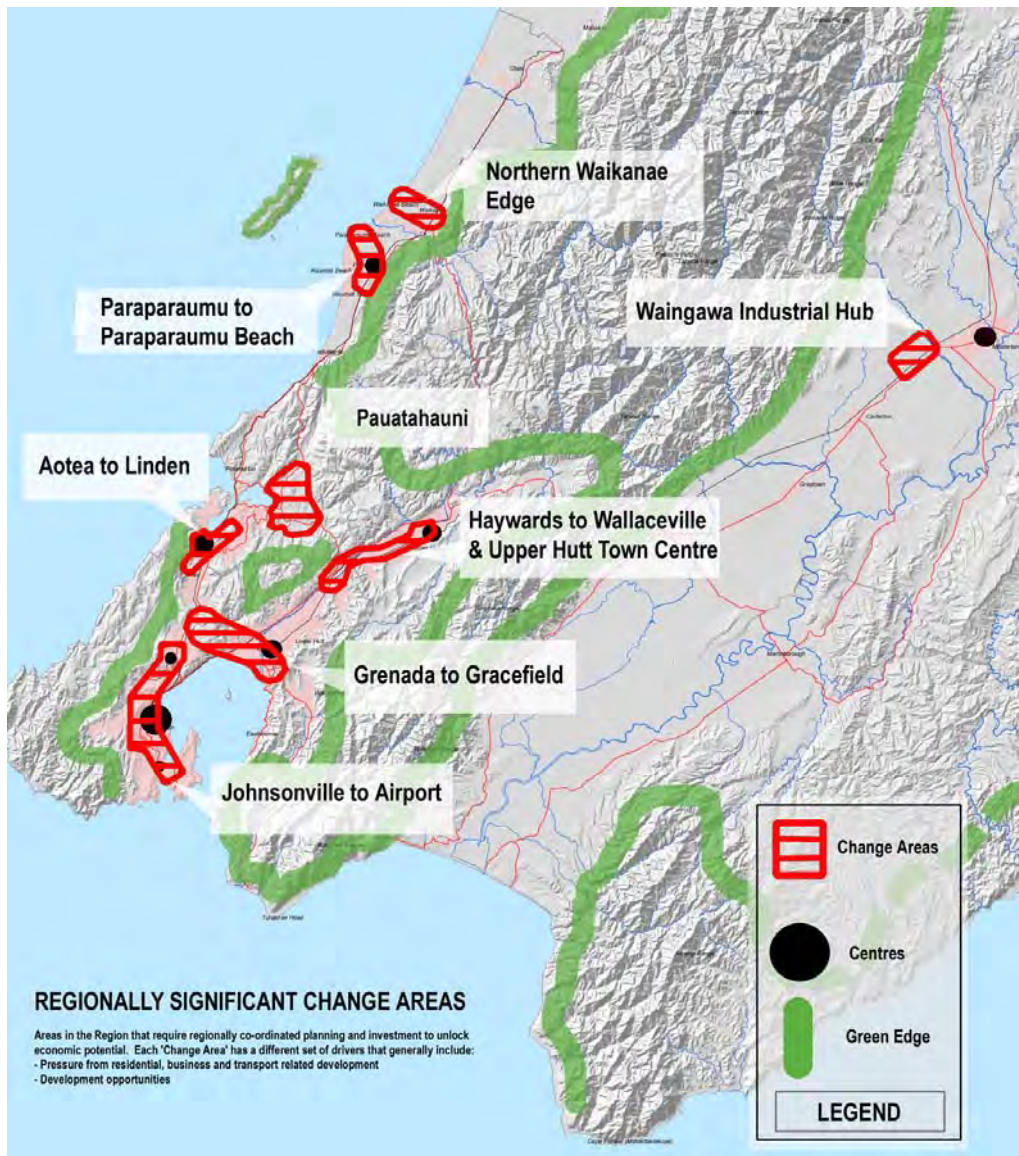
- Northern Waikanae edge
- Pauatahanui
- Grenada to Gracefield
- Johnsonville to airport growth spine
- Paraparaumu town to Paraparaumu beach
- Porirua to Linden
- State Highway 2 / State Highway 58 interchange to Upper Hutt city centre;  
and
- Waingawa.

#### Explanation:

The Change Areas addressed in policy 8 have been identified in the Wellington Regional Strategy as being of critical importance to achievement of quality regional form. These areas are predicted to either come under significant development pressure (e.g. the northern Waikanae edge) or provide significant development opportunities (e.g. Porirua to Linden). While development may occur outside of the Change Areas, they are the likely location of the majority of the region's future urban growth. Significant connections also exist between the different Change Areas.

Given the regional significance of the Change Areas and the connections between them, policy 8 encourages regional collaboration on their future management.

The general location of each Change Area is illustrated in the following map.



## 5.9 Policy 9: Change Areas – plan changes, resource consents and notice of requirement considerations

When considering applications for resource consents, changes to district plans and notice of requirements, within or adjoining the region’s “Change Areas”, city and district councils shall recognise the regional significance of these areas and have particular regard to:

- The growth of Waikanae is contained at its northern boundary by the introduction of an urban edge in the Kapiti Coast District Plan<sup>1</sup>;
- Any future development around Pauatahanui takes into account the regionally significant ecological values of the area, the need to integrate land use with the proposed Transmission Gully Motorway and the

<sup>1</sup> Depending on timing of the proposed RPS this bullet point may instead refer to the established urban edge defined by KCDC which would be appended.

potential for significant retail activity in the area to erode the viability of the region's sub-regional centres;

- The future development of the Grenada to Gracefield Change Area takes account of options for an east-west road link between State Highway 2 and State Highway 1;
- The location of the key regional facilities and the region's economic engine room within the Johnsonville to Airport growth spine is recognised;
- The potential for development in the Paraparaumu to Paraparaumu Beach Change Area to undermine the intensification of the Paraparaumu town centre is avoided;
- The significant development opportunities within the Porirua to Linden, State Highway 2 / State Highway 58 interchange to Upper Hutt City Centre and the Waingawa Change Areas are provided for and integrated with adjoining transport infrastructure.

#### Explanation:

Policy 9 recognises that given the importance of the region's Change Areas it is not sufficient to only encourage regional collaboration over their management, as provided for in policy 8. Consideration of the regional significance of the Change Areas is required as part of deliberations on district plan changes, resource consent applications and notices of requirement.

The bullet points included in policy 9 identify key issues requiring consideration in relation to each Change Area. However they are not the only issues which contribute to a Change Area's regional significance and which should be taken into account when considering development proposals.

Consequently, it will be important when considering development proposals that the implications of the proposal on the relevant Change Areas are broadly assessed. Planning frameworks for each change area will be produced as part of the implementation of the Wellington Regional Strategy (Method 2(h)). These frameworks will assist with determining the scope of such assessments.

### **5.10 Policy 10: Development to support the regions compact form**

When considering applications for resource consents and notice of requirements for subdivision, use and development, or the operation, maintenance, upgrade and expansion of infrastructure, local authorities shall have particular regard to the extent to which a proposal reinforces or undermines the region's compact form and the development of the:

- Wellington Central Business District
- Sub-regional centres; and the
- Change Areas

#### Explanation:

Policy 10 recognises that individual developments have the potential to reinforce or undermine the region's compact form, the region's central business district and its sub regional centres and the development of the region's change areas.

Large scale development proposals may affect the region's compact form directly, while numerous smaller scale proposals may generate cumulative impacts.

Policy 10 therefore requires decision making authorities to take account of the extent to which all proposed subdivision, use and development, including infrastructure proposals, reinforce or undermine the region's compact form and the development of the region's central business district, sub regional centres and change areas.

In taking account of this matter decision makers should recognise that while density is one of the factors which contributes to a compact form, attention to integrated development and connectivity is equally important. The region's compact form incorporates and will continue to incorporate a mix of densities, including less dense forms of development.

#### **5.11 Policy 11: Big box retail**

When considering applications for resource consents and changes to district plans for big box retail, city and district councils shall have particular regard to controlling activities that:

- Are inconsistent with the region's urban design principles (see section 8);
- Could erode the viability and vibrancy of the regional Central Business District or sub-regional centres; and
- Could create unsustainable demands for new infrastructure or upgrades to existing infrastructure.

#### Explanation:

For the purposes of Policy 11 big box retail means all retail activities undertaken from within buildings with a gross floor area of greater than 500 m<sup>2</sup>. It includes buildings, such as malls, that have a total floor area of greater than 500m<sup>2</sup>, but which are divided into smaller components for the use of separate retailers.

Policy 11 recognises the particular issue presented by the development of big box retail across the region and that it is not appropriate to rely on generic policies such as policy 2 and policy 10 to manage this issue.

Big box retail has developed in many parts of the region and to a varying degree has generated adverse outcomes in terms of the quality of the urban environment, the viability and vibrancy of existing centres of commercial and

community activity and the demand for new or upgraded infrastructure. The region's experience has shown that attention to the design and location of big box retail can significantly reduce the adverse effects of such activities and enable them to integrate within the form, structure and function of the existing urban environment.

The term infrastructure has the same definition as that included in section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

## **5.12 Policy 12: Rural residential development**

The regional council and the region's city and district council's will work together to investigate:

- Opportunities for and constraints to rural residential development across the region; and
- Mechanisms to manage areas suitable for long-term rural residential development or transitional rural residential development preceding urbanisation.

Explanation:

Policy 12 recognises that rural residential activities simultaneously offer the region economic investment, development and growth opportunities, while presenting challenges in terms of rural productivity, urban development and environmental management.

More specifically, providing for rural residential housing as a living choice offers the potential to:

- unlock 'lifestyle' related economic development opportunities;
- attract 'lifestyle' investment into the region;
- better utilise poor productivity areas;
- enhance or add value to places and communities; and
- may provide opportunities for enhancing the management of ecological values and some sensitive environments.

However these potential benefits need to be balanced against the need to:

- manage, and in some cases protect, functioning and productive rural economies;
- protect and manage sensitive environmental and amenity values;
- avoid hazard creation;
- manage infrastructure limitations; and
- manage urban sprawl and the protection of future urban growth areas.

Consideration must also be given to ensuring that rural-residential market need is actually being appropriately met, and that the right lifestyle choices are being provided in the right locations.

Given the complexity of these elements and the current limitations of the information available within the region, policy 12 recognises that the sustainable management of the rural residential resources is best achieved through the region's councils working together on the matter.

### **5.13 Policy 13: Quality open space network**

To investigate ways to improve the integration of the region's public open space network.

Explanation:

Policy 13 recognises that quality open space is a fundamental part of region's existing good urban form and a fundamental element of quality of life for its residents. The policy also recognises that improving the integration in the management of these areas will improve the quality of the open spaces themselves.

Increasingly each of the region's communities is beginning to see their open spaces as not only providing for local recreation and amenity but as part of a 'network concept'. These networks are being articulated as city or district wide systems but there is also an increasing appreciation of a regional system. For example, Wellington City Council, via key policy documents (Capital Spaces and Wellington Wet and Wild), notes the links between the Town Belt and the Outer Green belt and the potential for a system that links through Porirua City into the Tararua Ranges.

Policy 13 therefore promotes the ongoing investigation of ways to improve the level of integration within the region's public open space network.

### **5.14 Policy 14: Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure - plans**

District and regional plans shall include provisions that:

- Recognise the social and economic benefits associated with nationally and regionally significant infrastructure, including those benefits that occur outside of the district or the region; and
- Recognise and provide for the efficient operation, maintenance and upgrade of existing nationally and regionally significant infrastructure, including the management of reverse sensitivity effects on these physical resources.

Explanation:

Policy 14 recognises that nationally and regionally significant infrastructure generates significant economic and social benefits. However, while the adverse impacts and reverse sensitivity issues of nationally and regionally significant infrastructures are felt locally, often the benefits of this infrastructure are felt elsewhere.

Policy 14 therefore requires regional and district plans to include provisions which recognise these benefits and which also recognise and provide for the efficient operation of infrastructure.

Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure includes:

- The Strategic Transport Network as defined in the Regional Land Transport Strategy 2006
- The National Electricity Grid
- The regional bulk water supply network
- Wellington Airport
- Port Wellington; and
- Wellington, Kenepuru, Hutt and Masterton hospitals.

#### **5.15 Policy 15: Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure – resource consent and notice of requirements**

When considering applications for resource consent application or notice of requirement that relates to nationally or regionally significant infrastructure, local authorities shall have particular regard to the social and economic benefits of that infrastructure, including those benefits that occur outside of their district or the region.

Explanation:

Policy 15 recognises that, in addition to the region and district plan requirement in policy 14, consideration of the benefits of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure needs to be required as part of decisions on individual infrastructure proposals.

#### **5.16 Policy 16: Sequencing of land use and co-ordination with funding**

When considering applications for resource consents, notice of requirements and changes to district plans, for urban development city and district councils shall have particular regard to whether the proposed development is:

- located and sequenced to make efficient use of existing infrastructure capacity; and/or
- co-ordinated with the funding, development, implementation and operation of new and adequate infrastructure capacity.

Explanation:

Policy 16 recognises that land use decisions have a direct relationship to the funding, sequencing and development of new infrastructure and infrastructure upgrades. In the past land use development has occurred within the region

with the resulting significant infrastructure implications having not been fully accounted for in the decision making process.

Policy 16 therefore requires the region's city and district councils to consider the infrastructure implications of land use proposals, including those implications within the immediate vicinity of the proposal and further afield, when making decisions on district plan changes, resource consents and notices of requirement.

The term infrastructure has the same definition as that included in section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

### **5.17 Policy 17: Housing choice**

To encourage housing design and development that increases the range of housing types across the region.

Explanation:

Policy 17 recognises the significant role that housing choice plays in the enabling the region's communities and individuals to provide for their social and economic wellbeing. It therefore promotes housing design and development that will lead to an increase in the range of housing across the region.

## **6. Methods**

### **6.1 Method 1: District and/or regional plan changes**

District and/or regional plans shall implement:

- (a) Policy 1 at, or before, the time of the next plan review
- (b) Policy 4 at, or before, the time of the next plan review
- (c) Policy 5 at, or before, the time of the next plan review
- (d) Policy 6 at, or before, the time of the next plan review
- (e) Policy 7 at, or before, the time of the next plan review
- (f) Policy 14 at, or before, the time of the next plan review

The Regional Land Transport Strategy shall implement Policy 1 at the time of the next Strategy review.

### **6.2 Method 2: Consideration of resource consents, notices of requirement or plan changes**

District and City Councils shall implement:

- (a) Policy 2 when assessing resource consents and notice of requirements;



- (b) Policy 9 when assessing resource consents, notice of requirements and considering changes to district plans;
- (c) Policy 10 when assessing resource consents and notice of requirements;
- (d) Policy 15 when assessing resource consents and notice of requirements; and
- (e) Policy 16 when assessing resource consents, notice of requirements and changes to district plans.

### **6.3 Method 3: Wellington Regional Strategy**

Greater Wellington Regional Council will work with the region's city and district councils on the following Wellington Regional Strategy actions that implement a number of the policies above. Actions include:

- (a) Formally sign-up to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and develop a regional action plan to implement the commitment to the urban design protocol.
- (b) Review existing codes of practice and subdivision design guides and agree to and create an agreed framework for a joint code of practice.
- (c) In conjunction with open space sector organisations, identify major gaps and opportunities to improve regional integration of public open space and, if necessary, develop a regionally agreed action plan for improving the integration of public open space.
- (d) Complete a centres' development vision for each sub-regional central and the regions central business district in Wellington City and integrate the individual visions into an overall vision for the region's centres.
- (e) Develop regionally consistent principles for managing big box retail activities.
- (f) Complete a study of factors affecting supply and demand of industrial based employment areas.
- (g) In conjunction with Federated Farmers and rural sector groups, develop regional principles to guide the identification and release of sustainable rural residential development opportunities and to promote best practice rural design.
- (h) Complete planning frameworks for each Change Area.
- (i) Complete a heads of agreement with major private sector developers to explore innovative housing design/developments that increase the range of housing types in key parts of the region.

## 6.4 Method 4: Regional structure planning guide

Greater Wellington Regional Council will work with the region's city and district councils to prepare a regional structure planning guide.

## 7. Reasons for the objectives, policies and methods

### 7.1 Background

The preceding objectives, policies and methods establish a policy framework for urban development within the Wellington region.

This framework is to a large extent based on the *Good Regional Form* focus area in the Wellington Regional Strategy ("the Strategy"). The Strategy recognises that good regional form is fundamental to a successful and sustainable economy and to a high quality of life for residents.

The Strategy also recognises that the current form of the Wellington region rates well by international standards. Therefore the broad focus of the Strategy and the preceding policy framework is to ensure that future development maintains and, where appropriate, enhances the region's existing good form.

Within this broad focus four resource management issues have been identified. These are:

- Compact regional form
- Quality urban design
- Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure; and
- Housing choice.

The principal reasons for the objectives, policies and methods associated with each of these issues are discussed below.

### 7.2 Compact regional form

Issue 1: *Compact regional form* recognises the strength of, and efficiencies generated by the region's existing compact corridor pattern and also recognises the potential for un-coordinated and sporadic development to undermine this strength.

In the main, evidence suggests that current development patterns within the region are not significantly undermining the current good form. However there are specific parts of the region where the growth pressure is greater and where the current regional form is beginning to 'fray', e.g. the northern edge of Waikanae. In this specific case, the Kapiti Coast District Coast has recognised the issue and is considering the options available to resolve it.

Concerns also exist that while pace of development may be slower in other parts of the region, the cumulative impact of development in these areas has the potential undermine the region's current good form. Such concerns relate not only to expansion at the urban fringe but also to development patterns within existing urban boundaries. This includes the establishment of new nodes of

commercial activity away from existing centres, which in some cases has the potential to undermine the existing centres and the significant community investment that has already been made in those centres.

The provisions which address issue 1 are:

- Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 9
- Policies 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 16
- Methods 1(b), 1(c), 1(d), 1(e), 2(b), 2(c) 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 3(h) & 4.

These provisions address a range of specific elements that contribute towards the current good form and which will promote its enhancement. The policies and methods use regulatory approaches, including requiring the inclusion of provisions within regional and district plans, and non-regulatory approaches. The mix of approaches chosen takes account of the relatively high costs that may be generated by regulatory approaches. However this mix also takes account of the relatively high effectiveness of regulatory approaches in relation to the management of urban development. Overall it is considered that the package of objectives, policies and methods is the most appropriate way of promoting the sustainable management of the region's compact form.

### 7.3 Quality Urban Design

Issue 2: *Quality Urban Design* recognises the economic and quality of life benefits that are generated when our urban environments are designed to a high standard.

Evidence suggests that the region's urban design practices, currently and in the past, have been and continue to be mixed. Across the region a number of initiatives have been completed or are currently underway, which are consistent with the principles of good urban design. These include:

- In the Wairarapa the local authorities have recognised and taken action to protect and enhance the character and historic values of the town centres
- Hutt City Council has initiated a design investigation of the options to improve the connection between Petone and its foreshore
- Porirua City Council has developed a "City Centre Framework Plan" to guide the future development of the city centre.

However, equally numerous examples of developments which adversely affect the character of an area, or which failure to promote connectivity, exist.

The provisions which address issue 2 are:

- Objectives 1, 3, 4, 6 & 7
- Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 & 13
- Methods 1(a), 1(b), 1(d), 2(a), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g), 3(h) & 4.

The policies and methods use regulatory approaches, including requiring the inclusion of provisions within regional and district plans, and non-regulatory approaches. The mix of approaches chosen takes account of the relatively high costs that may be generated by regulatory approaches. It also takes account of the effectiveness that can be achieved by complementing non-regulatory methods, such as design principles and guides, with regulatory approaches such as requiring district plan provisions. Overall the package of objectives, policies and methods is considered the most appropriate way of promoting quality urban design in the Wellington Region.

#### **7.4 Nationally & regionally significant infrastructure**

Issue 3: *Nationally and regionally significant infrastructure* recognises that significant benefits are generated by nationally and regionally significant infrastructure. The issue also recognises the potential adverse effects that land use activities can have on these important resources.

Most land use activities in the region do not significantly affect the efficient operation of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure. However, it is clear that certain land use activities, particularly those located in close vicinity to the infrastructure have the potential to affect its operation. Such effects may occur directly, e.g. vehicle access from adjoining land uses onto strategic roads. Perhaps more commonly such effects can occur indirectly, associated with reverse sensitivities. In these cases the sensitivity of adjoining land uses to the unavoidable effects of infrastructure, reduces the ability to utilise existing infrastructure efficiently and reduces opportunities to upgrade that infrastructure to meet growing demand.

The provisions which address issue 3 are:

- Objectives 8 & 9
- Policies 4, 14, 15 & 16
- Methods 1(b), 1(f) 2(d), 2(e) & 4.

The policies and methods mainly use regulatory approaches, including requiring the inclusion of provisions within regional and district plans. While regulatory approaches can generate relatively high costs, it is considered that regulatory approaches offer the most effective means of achieving the objectives. Overall it is considered that the package of objectives, policies and methods is the most appropriate way of promoting the sustainable management of nationally and regionally significant infrastructure in the Wellington Region.

#### **7.5 Housing choice**

Issue 4: *Housing choice* recognises that the lack of housing choice limits the ability of the region's people and communities to provide for their social and economic wellbeing.

Research suggests that there is considerable latent demand for a wider range of housing types and that there is limited choice of housing stock in many parts of the region. Good housing choice is generally available for lifestyle and lower

density settlement forms around the region, however medium and higher density options are restricted beyond the Wellington CBD, and within walking distance of public transit.

Retirees, for example, encounter limited housing choice, apart from three bedroom homes or purpose built retirement villages. This is leading to social isolation as people age and find it difficult to source appropriate housing within their community.

The provisions which address issue 4 are:

- Objectives 4 & 10
- Policies 5, 6, 12 & 17
- Methods 1(c), 1(d), 3(g) & 3(i).

The policies and methods use a mix of regulatory approaches, including requiring the inclusion of provisions within regional and district plans, and non-regulatory approaches. The regulatory approach seeks to ensure that district plan provisions enable, rather than require, the development of higher density housing options. Therefore significant costs are not expected as a result of this approach.

Given that there is limited scope for regulatory approaches that require greater housing choice, it is considered that combining regulatory approaches which seek to enable greater choice with non-regulatory approaches that promote greater choice, is the most effective way of addressing the issue. Overall it is considered that the package of objectives, policies and methods is the most appropriate way of promoting greater housing choice, and consequently enabling the region's people and communities to provide for their social and economic wellbeing.

## **8. Wellington Region Urban Design Principles**

The region's urban design principles are taken from the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol and are:

### **8.1 Context**

Quality urban design sees buildings, places and spaces not as isolated elements but as part of the whole town or city. In this regard quality urban design:

- takes a long term view
- recognises and builds on landscape context and character
- results in buildings and places that are adapted to local climatic conditions
- provides for public transport, roading, cycling and walking networks that are integrated with each other and the land uses they serve

- examines each project in relation to its setting and ensures that each development fits in with and enhances its surroundings
- understands the social, cultural and economic context as well as physical elements and relationships
- considers the impact on the health of the population who live and work there
- celebrates cultural identity and recognises the heritage values of a place
- ensures incremental development contributes to an agreed and coherent overall result.

## **8.2 Character**

Quality urban design reflects and enhances the distinctive character and culture of our urban environment, and recognises that character is dynamic and evolving, not static. In this regard quality urban design:

- reflects the unique identity of each town, city and neighbourhood and strengthens the positive characteristics that make each place distinctive
- protects and manages our heritage, including buildings, places and landscapes
- protects public open space, and improves the quality, quantity and distribution of local open space over the long term
- protects and enhances distinctive landforms, water bodies and indigenous plants and animals
- provides a positive contribution to the environmental health of urban streams, the harbours, beaches and their catchments
- creates locally appropriate and where relevant inspiring architecture, spaces and places
- reflects and celebrates our unique New Zealand culture and identity and celebrates our multi-cultural society.

## **8.3 Choice**

Quality urban design fosters diversity and offers people choice in the urban form of our towns and cities, and choice in densities, building types, transport options, and activities. Flexible and adaptable design provides for unforeseen uses, and creates resilient and robust towns and cities.

Quality urban design:

- ensures urban environments provide opportunities for all, especially the disadvantaged

- allows people to choose different sustainable lifestyle options, locations, modes of transport,
- types of buildings and forms of tenure
- encourages a diversity of activities within mixed use developments and neighbourhoods
- supports designs which are flexible and adaptable and which will remain useful over
- the long term
- ensures public spaces are accessible by everybody, including people with disabilities.

#### **8.4 Connections**

Good connections enhance choice, support social cohesion, make places lively and safe, and facilitate contact among people. Quality urban design recognises how all networks - streets, railways, walking and cycling routes, services, infrastructure, and communication networks - connect and support healthy neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Places with good connections between activities and with careful placement of facilities benefit from reduced travel times and lower environmental impacts. Where physical layouts and activity patterns are easily understood, residents and visitors can navigate around the city easily. Quality urban design:

- creates safe, attractive and secure pathways and links between centres, landmarks and
- neighbourhoods
- facilitates green networks that link public and private open space
- places a high priority on walking, cycling and public transport
- anticipates travel demands and provides a sustainable choice of integrated transport modes
- improves accessibility to public services and facilities
- treats streets and other thoroughfares as positive spaces with multiple functions
- provides formal and informal opportunities for social and cultural interaction
- facilitates access to services and efficient movement of goods and people

- provides environments that encourage people to become more physically active.

## **8.5 Creativity**

Quality urban design encourages creative and innovative approaches. Creativity adds richness and diversity, and turns a functional place into a memorable place. Creativity facilitates new ways of thinking, and willingness to think through problems afresh, to experiment and rewrite rules, to harness new technology, and to visualise new futures. Creative urban design supports a dynamic urban cultural life and fosters strong urban identities. Quality urban design:

- emphasises innovative and imaginative solutions
- combines processes and design responses that enhance the experience we have of urban environments
- incorporates art and artists in the design process at an early stage to contribute to creative approaches
- values public art that is integrated into a building, space or place
- builds a strong and distinctive local identity
- utilises new technology
- incorporates different cultural perspectives.

## **8.6 Custodianship**

Quality urban design reduces the environmental impacts of our towns and cities through environmentally sustainable and responsive design solutions. Custodianship recognises the lifetime costs of buildings and infrastructure, and aims to hand on places to the next generation in as good or better condition. Stewardship of our towns includes the concept of kaitiakitanga. It creates enjoyable, safe public spaces, a quality environment that is cared for, and a sense of ownership and responsibility in all residents and visitors. Quality urban design:

- protects landscapes, ecological systems and cultural heritage values
- manages the use of resources carefully, through environmentally responsive and sustainable design solutions
- manages land wisely
- utilises 'green' technology in the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure
- incorporates renewable energy sources and passive solar gain



- creates buildings, spaces, places and transport networks that are safer, with less crime and fear of crime
- avoids or mitigates the effects of natural and man-made hazards
- considers the on-going care and maintenance of buildings, spaces, places and networks
- uses design to improve the environmental performance of infrastructure
- considers the impact of design on people's health.

## 8.7 Collaboration

Towns and cities are designed incrementally as we make decisions on individual projects. Quality urban design requires good communication and co-ordinated actions from all decision-makers: central government, local government, professionals, transport operators, developers and users. To improve our urban design capability we need integrated training, adequately funded research and shared examples of best practice. Quality urban design:

- supports a common vision that can be achieved over time
- depends on leadership at many levels
- uses a collaborative approach to design that acknowledges the contributions of many different disciplines and perspectives
- involves communities in meaningful decision-making processes
- acknowledges and celebrates examples of good practice
- recognises the importance of training in urban design and research at national, regional and local levels.