



Wellington regional urban design action plan and stocktake



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1.0 Background

1.1 Wellington Regional Strategy

The Wellington Regional Strategy document identifies that investment in good regional form is fundamental to successful and sustainable economic growth of the Wellington region.

Good urban design is important to the success of the regional focus areas identified in the strategy.

Good urban design in its broadest context is significant to all of the “good regional form” projects identified in the WRS including:

- centres – retail
- industrial land
- intensification
- rural residential development
- affordable housing
- integration of landuse and transport needs
- open space

The main Wellington Regional Strategy actions on urban design are:

- 1. All councils are signed up to the New Zealand Urban Design protocol (NZUDP)**
 - All but two councils are signed up, the WRS office and Ministry for the Environment have been working with both South Wairarapa District Council and Masterton District Council to help them better understand the implications of signing up to the protocol
- 2. The development and implementation of a Regional action plan for urban design**
 - Led by WRS office and urban design working group
- 3. Review of subdivision design guides**
 - Kapiti Coast District Council is leading this project

1.2 Proposed Wellington Regional Policy Statement

The proposed Wellington Regional Policy Statement 2009 identifies poor urban design as a regionally significant issue.

“Poor quality urban design can adversely affect public health, social equity, land values, the vibrancy of local centres and economies, and the provision of, and access to, civic services. It can also increase the use of non-renewable resources and vehicle emissions in the region.”

Objective 21 of the proposed RPS recognises the importance of compact, well designed and sustainable regional form. Policy 53 recognises the importance of good regional urban design and seeks that the region’s urban design principles are considered when designing developments, including infrastructure.

1.3 Wellington regional urban design working group

An urban design working group was set up to assist with the WRS actions. This group is being led by the Wellington Regional Strategy office. Members of this group have a particular interest in urban design within their own councils and there are also some university and central government partners. The group met once in 2008 to develop an agenda for a SORT workshop in August. (SORT is the Senior Officers Resource Team and comprises senior council staff across the region).

The WRS urban design working group members are:

Victoria McGregor	WRS office
Gerald Blunt	Wellington City Council
Andrew Tester	Upper Hutt City Council
Paki Maaka	Hutt City Council
Dale Wills / Emily Thomson	Kapiti Coast District Council
Laura Paynter / Tami Woods	Greater Wellington Regional Council
Matt Trlin	Porirua City Council
Jane Davis	Greater Wellington Regional Council
Melanie Thornton	WRS office
Edita Babos	Carterton District Council
Jill Beck	Greater Wellington Regional Council
Chris McDonald	Victoria University
Yvonne Weeber	Ministry for the Environment

1.4 Development of Wellington regional urban design action plan

A Wellington Regional Strategy SORT workshop was held on 19 August 2008 with the purpose of:

- Discussing how we best proceed with a regional approach to urban design
- To share information on how councils are addressing and adopting urban design principles
- To understand the constraints that TA's are facing in addressing and adopting urban design principles
- To confirm the SORT Urban Design working group's initial assessment of urban design issues across the region

The option of a regional peer review panel was discussed at the SORT workshop, however, it was decided not to proceed at this stage. This will be further investigated.

The outcome of this workshop was to prepare a draft regional urban design action plan.

The regional urban design action plan 2009 was produced through collaboration by the local authorities in the region (Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington City, Hutt City, Upper Hutt City, Porirua City, Kapiti Coast District, South Wairarapa District, Carterton District, and Masterton District Councils) and in liaison with Ministry of the Environment, and Victoria University Wellington.

The regional urban design action plan 2009 will be implemented through voluntary participation of partner organisations named above.

The WRS Committee will be responsible for the implementation of this plan through the coordination of the Wellington regional urban design working group.

The regional urban design action plan will become operative on 21 July 2009.

The regional urban design action plan will be reviewed by the regional urban design working group on an annual basis and updated accordingly, in conjunction with the outcomes of an annual regional urban design summit.

2.0 Wellington regional urban design action plan 2009

Principle/Project	Actions	By whom	By when
New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (NZUDP)	All remaining councils in the Wellington region are formally signed up to the NZ Urban Design Protocol	South Wairarapa District Council Masterton District Council	September 2009
	Assist Wairarapa councils in understanding implications and benefits of signing up to NZUDP	Gerald Blunt (WCC) / Emily Thomson (KCDC) / WRS office	May 2009
Education / training	Investigate opportunities for urban design training in the Wellington region through the development of modules for practitioners, officers, councillors, surveyors, developers in conjunction with NZPI, IPENZ, MfE and other relevant associations	Gerald Blunt (WCC) / WRS office	September 2009
	Investigating opportunities to partner with education providers eg. Victoria University. Promoting urban design courses and potential linkages to council case studies	WRS Office/WCC/Victoria University	On-going
Urban design information hub	Develop a WRS website portal on urban design acting as regional hub for urban design material and information	WRS office / urban design working group	August 2009 and ongoing
Best practice – other council models	Develop a list of councils and contact details for those councils who are open to external council staff attending their urban design review	Urban design working group / WRS office	August 2009

Principle/Project	Actions	By whom	By when
	meetings		
Register of urban design practitioners	Develop a register of available urban design practitioners and accredited commissioners including an outline of their key skill base and areas of expertise, and an indication of which council's have used these practitioners Display on WRS website urban design project page	Wellington City Council / WRS office	October 2009
Peer review panel	Investigate the development of a regional urban design review panel	Urban design working group	Ongoing
Subdivision design guidelines review	Recognise variations across the region in subdivision design codes and other related urban design plans/strategies through a stocktake of all territorial authorities, and the provision of best practice examples (information sharing exercise)	Kapiti Coast District Council / SORT	October 2009
Annual regional urban design summit	Develop process to engage with all TA's across the Wellington region on urban design and to regularly review stocktake and actions through an annual regional urban design summit –leadership, raising the profile of urban design in the Wellington region	WRS office / urban design working group	June 2010 then annually

3.0 Wellington regional urban design stocktake 2009

A summary of council urban design initiatives has been developed across the Wellington region as at March 2009. It is anticipated that this will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated accordingly.

3.1 Porirua City Council

Porirua City Council does not have any dedicated urban designers employed by the council. It does have an internal review panel with cross council representation which meets weekly to review, give advice and comment on projects at very early stages associated with council core business e.g. development, renewal and maintenance projects involving public places and assets (such as buildings, parks, streets etc); infill housing; Porirua Development Framework; village planning and implementation programmes; District Plan Changes. The panel includes members of the District Plan team.



The review panel factors in urban design principles, crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and sustainability principles. The review panel resource is also available to the resource consents team. It is linked to LTCCP funding with a small annual budget for training for specific issues.

Every six weeks these meetings focus on wider issues. Every six months community groups are invited to discuss wider planning/urban design issues with this review group.

3.2 Hutt City Council

Hutt City Council has one dedicated urban designer on staff who aims to encourage collaboration and buy-in to good urban design in projects across council.

With a focus on vision and place making current urban design projects include:

- Heritage
- CBD Development Framework
- Suburban Shopping Centre Revitalisation
- Promotion/partnering for desirable development
- Building public awareness and expectation for good design.



There is currently no review panel group operating at Hutt City Council and external consultants are engaged for resource consent applications assessment.

3.3 Kapiti Coast District Council

Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) encourages community design processes including vision development through its community outcomes / LTCCP process.

KCDC has both statutory (district plan) and non statutory (design guides) provisions for urban design e.g. design controls on large retail formatting.

KCDC has a cross-council design and review panel with a similar purpose to Porirua City's group. This group has been in existence for approximately 4 years.

Internal council projects: It is mandatory for all internal KCDC projects to go through the design and review panel otherwise they don't get approval. The group is made up of



cross council representation including staff from policy, consents/planning, subdivision engineer and other specialist resources as required e.g. traffic engineer, stormwater engineers.

External projects: applicants are invited to table their proposals/projects at pre-lodgement to council e.g. large-scale subdivisions and private plan changes to discuss the concept design.

There are also meetings with developers and their representatives with the aim of educating and liaising to encourage good subdivision, discuss what's working and not working.

3.4 Upper Hutt City Council



Upper Hutt signed up to the NZUDP in early 2008. Upper Hutt is currently preparing an action plan around urban design. Resourcing of urban design principles has been enabled through the development of a Growth Management Strategy in Upper Hutt. This includes reviews of intensification and subdivision design within council and CBD revitalisation. Upper Hutt's District Plan does not currently incorporate clear direction around urban design approaches and principles.

Upper Hutt does currently have a regular review meeting of major projects and there is an opportunity to factor in urban design approaches and principles as part of these meetings.

There is also the opportunity to increase capacity to educate local surveyors and other consultants on urban design principles and their relevance in Upper Hutt. Also to increase in-house expertise in urban design approaches and the importance of good urban design e.g. council's own engineers and infrastructure staff.

3.5 Wellington City Council

Wellington City has a dedicated urban design unit of 12 people that includes heritage.

The urban design unit provides a wide range of advice across the Council from a strategic and policy level to advising and directing the delivery of public space improvement projects.

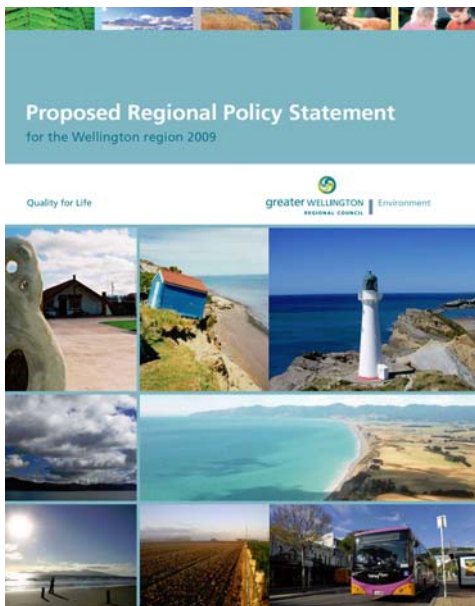
The urban design unit co-ordinates urban design, heritage and landscape advice on regulatory processes including District Plan



plan changes, design guides and resource consent applications. The team co-ordinates advice through an internal peer-reviewing process which is supported by external expertise.

The unit provides leadership and also advises on the quality of the built environment including the public spaces of the city. This is done through advising internal Council teams and external agencies on strategic issues, the delivery of an integrative programme of new and upgraded public spaces in the central city and suburban centres and the design and management of all street furniture throughout the city through a technical manual. This work is supported by a cross council advisory group –members are internal to the Council and supplemented by external experts.

3.6 Greater Wellington Regional Council



Greater Wellington’s role in urban design revolves around the Regional Policy Statement review. The proposed Regional Policy Statement includes regional urban design principles and directs councils to give particular regard to these principles when assessing resource consents, notices of requirement and changes to plans.

Greater Wellington has signed up to the NZUDP, has audited its own facilities and plans to link renewal/maintenance work to the region’s urban design principles.

3.7 Wairarapa Councils

All three Wairarapa councils (South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton) have developed a Proposed Combined Wairarapa District Plan. Subdivision, land development and urban growth in the Wairarapa are identified as district wide issues.

Masterton and South Wairarapa District Councils are the only outstanding councils in the Wellington region to sign up to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol.

Masterton District Council

Masterton District Council as part of the plan process identified the areas for growth both for residential and industrial. The industrial area has already completed its Structure plan



and work on the Comprehensive development plan is ready to start work. The industrial area is located on the Heavy Traffic By-pass. One of the residential growth areas was already partly subdivided and is almost ready to lodge a Structure plan for the remainder of the area. Masterton has historic heritage precincts in their residential and rural areas.

Masterton District Council planners have a good relationship with developers and surveyors. Planners, engineers, environmental health, parks and reserves staff and iwi meet monthly to discuss any development within the district.

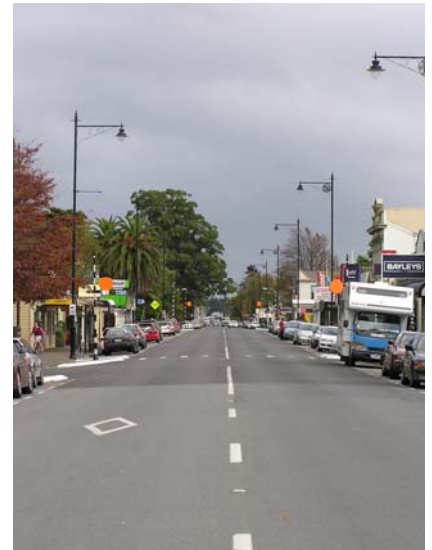
South Wairarapa District Council

South Wairarapa District has three historic heritage precincts in commercial zones in Greytown, Featherston and Martinborough.

There is a current variation of the district plan being prepared to extend the Greytown main street heritage precinct into the residential areas in Greytown with an accompanying design code.

Carterton District Council

Carterton District Council signed up to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol in 2007. The urban design action plan was approved by Carterton District Council in May 2008.



Carterton District has a character area in the Commercial zone of Carterton with design standards for Controlled Activity status.