

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Living Streets Wellington on Infill Housing Review Feedback

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About Living Streets

Living Streets Aotearoa (LSA) is a national organisation with a vision of “More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places – young and old, fast and slow, walking, sitting and standing, commuting, shopping, between appointments, for exercise, for leisure and for pleasure.”

The objectives of LSA are:

- to promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation
- to promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
- to work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners e.g. walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed and safety
- to advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional and urban land use and transport planning.

Living Streets Wellington is the local group based in the Wellington region which is working to make city and suburban centres in the region more walking-friendly.

For more information, please see: www.livingstreets.org.nz

Submission

1. Do you think a targeted approach to infill housing would better meet population needs, and lead to a more efficient, sustainable and better quality city?

(1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) 1

Comments: Denser housing and closer access to amenities such as schooling, shops and work leads to a higher active mode share which is important for health, emissions reduction and economic activity. Attractive neighbourhoods where more people walk mean friendlier, safer communities. Investment in walkways, footpath quality, street furniture including shelters, seats and signage and area-wide traffic calming can make this a reality. Putting more people into a high speed 70s style roading environment without modification is unlikely to achieve more walking!

2. Do you support identifying areas of change - where housing redevelopment would be encouraged, resulting in moderate to significant increases in residential density?

(1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) 1

Comments: Agree as targeting suitable areas for infill housing i.e. areas already close to public transport links and other amenities would reduce urban sprawl and also reduce the need for people to drive vehicles. The public transport spines need to be defined first. We believe that better bus priority and potential light rail routes would focus development as the cable car and trams did in the early 20th century in Kelburn and Island Bay.

3. Do you support the locations chosen for areas of change? Yes

Comments: In general, yes, due to their location, however the feelings and ideas of the people already living in these areas needs to be taken into consideration. These residents should be advised of any changes to housing in their own streets so they can be given the opportunity to object to any personal infringements on their rights to adequate sunlight and privacy.

Public transport routes are a useful start when choosing locations but capacity on the routes must increase, pedestrian amenity and access to public transport stops must be improved and adequate green space, school capacity and character protection need to be considered at the same time. It may be useful to provide some exemplar medium density development so developers and residents can see how GOOD quality is attractive AND economic to build. More sustainable building and design practices such as roof gardens, stormwater management and better energy intensity would also make the impact less.

Some shopping areas would greatly benefit from more residential units within them especially Tawa, Johnsonville and Kilbirnie. A partnership with OnTrack could be explored to build more closely to stations so their security is increased. The Waitakere City Council offices at Henderson station are a great example of PT/building integration. Overseas experience has shown that development follows good public transport, so it's important to have good public transport in place where you want development to occur.

This should be applied elsewhere in the Wellington region and the WCC should be an advocate for more density at rail stations. Tawa, Kenepuru, Raroa, Khandallah, Porirua, Naenae, Upper Hutt Railway Station and Waterloo spring to mind as potential sites for housing right by the rail services. With balconies and windows oriented suitably, the security of pedestrian access could be greatly improved.

Are there other locations that should be considered?

Not within WCC district except possibly by some railway stations on the Johnsonville line.

4. Do you support identifying areas of character protection - where infill housing would be allowed but with controls to ensure better quality?
(1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) 1

Comments: Suburbs with older style homes add value to Wellington's unique character and heritage. Some specific streets need higher level protection to keep intact examples. In other places, more wholesale replacement will give a more coherent picture. Both commercial and residential character should be considered. Some inner city suburbs are already medium density.

5. Do you support the locations chosen for areas of character protection? Yes

Are there other locations that should be considered? Yes

Other locations where there are houses with special older architectural features, usually located in the more established suburbs.

6. Do you have any other comments?

Living Streets supports infill housing and greater densification of houses in areas which are close to public transport and other amenities such as shopping centres, public parks and libraries. However these areas will then need allowance for adequate recreational zones i.e. children's playgrounds and dog exercise areas. Also needed will be safe routes for walkers and cyclists so as to encourage residents to reduce motor vehicle ownership and/or usage. Otherwise, increased volumes of motorised traffic will also cause problems as will the fact that some residents will choose to retain their own motor vehicle/s and there may be limited parking space. We understand the Council wishes to promote these areas because people can walk/cycle to transport links and amenities which is a fantastic idea. However we are concerned about the parking on footpath problem being exacerbated in these areas which will actually discourage pedestrians.

In summary, Living Streets' position is that infill and denser housing should be encouraged in areas within walking distance of shopping centres, and other facilities including public transport corridors, but that any developments should take into account the character of the area.