

# OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES



**Objective 1** To identify the role and function of each centre within Wellington City and provide a spatial framework for integrated planning.

## APPROACH

To identify the role and function of each centre, a hierarchy has been introduced (see Appendix 1). The hierarchy classifies each centre based on a range of factors including its comparative size and land area, population catchment, type of retail, range of activities, facilities and services, and levels of accessibility. There are five different types of centres in Wellington: the central city; two sub-regional centres, four town centres; six district centres; and 24 neighbourhood centres. The purpose of this hierarchy is to:

- promote the central city as the primary centre for Wellington City and the rest of the region;
- promote the Sub-Regional Centres, Town Centres and District Centres as major centres to service their suburban catchments providing for the weekly shopping, service and community needs;
- promote Neighbourhood Centres as performing a vital role in providing day-to-day convenience shopping for the neighbourhood as well as an important focus for neighbourhood services;
- ensure that Work Areas and Live/Work Areas (defined in Appendix 1) do not take on the role and function of centres or undermine their viability or vitality;
- ensure that development within existing centres (particularly retail or office) does not undermine the role and function of centres higher up in the hierarchy, due to an inappropriate scale.

The Wellington Regional Strategy identified the CBD as the key regional centre, and Johnsonville and Kilbirnie as two of eight sub-regional centres. This is being reflected in the review of the Regional Policy Statement.

To support the centre hierarchy and to provide a suitable spatial context for integrated centre planning and development, 11 Planning Areas have been identified. These recognise that centres, through their multiple functions, are inextricably linked to their surrounding areas. They provide a context for centre development and integrated planning and have been based on a combination of factors including geographical catchments for centres, topography and physical boundaries, communities of interest, social and political boundaries, and transport and infrastructure networks.

### POLICY 1.1

Retail development within centres should be of a scale and intensity appropriate to the place of that centre in the hierarchy. Redevelopment opportunities are likely to be of greater scale and intensity in the larger centres and of lesser scale and intensity in smaller centres.

### POLICY 1.2

The identified Planning Areas (and the centres within them) will be used to assist in integrated place-based planning, including the integrated planning of Council activities and programmes.

# Objective 2 To maintain and strengthen the central city as the primary centre within the city and region for shopping, employment, city-living, culture and entertainment, tourism and major events, and ensure that development in other locations does not compromise this role.

## APPROACH

The importance of the central city to both Wellington City and the region as a whole cannot be underestimated. As an employment centre it provides jobs for over 70,000 people (over 30% of all jobs within the region). As a shopping centre it has the largest concentration of retail in the region and is dominant in comparison goods, fashion and speciality shopping. The Golden Mile is of particular importance to the City, and is viewed by investors as Wellington's 'outdoor mall'. As a living environment it now houses over 12,000 people in a range of apartments providing a 'city-living' option for the region's population. It is an entertainment and events centre and a public transport hub, being the terminus for the region's rail network and the main 'conduit' for most of the bus routes. As a national capital, it houses most of the major government departments, Parliament and other national institutions. The importance of the central city to the economic and social health of the whole region is recognised in the Wellington Regional Strategy and the Regional Policy Statement.

The approach is therefore to maintain and strengthen the central city, to ensure that it retains its primacy as an employment and retail centre, to further increase its residential population, and to strengthen its other roles and functions. The concentration of office-based employment in the central city, combined with the significant retail offer of the Golden Mile, and the high quality of the public realm is critical to maintaining the international competitiveness of Wellington and achieving sustainable development outcomes.

Plan Change 48 has recently established a robust planning policy to guide the future development of the central city. To support this, a non-statutory framework is proposed to facilitate integrated development and management on a place-based basis, encompassing both Council activities and the activities of other stakeholders.

In addition, Plan Change 66 has introduced new provisions to allow Council to consider and manage the effects of large integrated retail developments proposed in the Central Area and Suburban Centres. Council seeks to ensure that any new development enhances the sustainability of existing retail centres (including the existing hierarchy of centres), does not compromise the sustainability of the transport network, and does not result in the unsustainable location of retail activities.

### POLICY 2.1

The role of Wellington as the nation's capital will be celebrated and strengthened.

### POLICY 2.2

A Central City Framework will be developed to guide the integrated development and management of the area. This will include the consideration of the following strategies and their implementation at a place-based level:

- Parking Policy;
- Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan;
- Review of infill housing;
- Community Facilities Policy;
- Bus Priority Programme;
- Footpath Management Policy;
- Walking and Cycling Policies;
- Climate Change Action Plan;
- Asset Management Plans and Renewals Programme;
- Public Space Development Programme.

### POLICY 2.3

A focus will continue to be placed on projects to maintain and improve the quality of the public realm in the central city to make it more attractive to businesses, workers, residents and visitors.

### POLICY 2.4

Retail proposals elsewhere in the city will only be supported where they are of a scale that does not impact on the long-term viability and vitality of the central city.

### POLICY 2.5

The central city is the preferred location for major office developments (over 5000m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area).



# Objective 3 To strengthen the multi-functional nature of centres, including their role as social and community foci, public transport hubs, places where people live and work, and centres for entertainment, recreation and local services.

## APPROACH

The Council has a significant influence on the nature of centres through the regulation of development, its investment in infrastructure, improvements to the public realm, through the development of community facilities and its ongoing city management role. It is important that these varied activities and other specific initiatives maximise the benefits to the city through coordination and integration on a place-basis.

A particular proposal under consideration to assist in the future management of our centres is the use of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). These have been extensively used in other parts of the country (sometimes known as 'Mainstreet' programmes) and overseas and can be an effective way of building local ownership and providing a funding base to address local environmental and social issues and to facilitate economic development opportunities. Marsden Village, Karori, is the only current example of such a mechanism in the city that is funded through targeted rates, however there are other business-led organisations such as the Courtenay Accord and Enterprise Miramar. BIDs are a form of private-public partnership that generate funding through a targeted rate on local property owners and/or businesses. They take the form of an incorporated society with a management committee and with members having voting rights.

### POLICY 3.1

Centre plans will be developed to facilitate the strengthening of centres and to ensure integrated and sustainable development. These will integrate Council's aspirations for centres expressed through the Council's policies and planning documents and will be developed as resources allow, in the following priority order:

- 'Growth Spine' nodes – central city, Johnsonville, Adelaide Road, and Kilbirnie;
- Centres proposed as 'Areas of Change' for housing intensification as part of the review of infill housing;
- Centres where significant private sector investment is proposed that will impact on the overall form and operation of that centre;
- Other centres (as appropriate).

### POLICY 3.2

Centre plans will be supported by the Council through:

- Coordinating planning processes and the provision of services and functions;
- Examining how infrastructure and other public facilities can be improved where gaps are found or opportunities identified;
- Continuing to focus new or upgraded community facilities in centres;

- Facilitating and encouraging investment in centres by public agencies and private investors;
- Working with businesses to identify opportunities to facilitate investment and improvement;
- Ensuring, in its regulatory capacity, that new development contributes towards the achievement of this Centres Policy;
- Reviewing, as necessary, the District Plan to incorporate and implement centre plans;
- The implementation of Council's Parking Policy.

### POLICY 3.3

The feasibility of establishing mechanisms such as Business Improvement Districts will be investigated to provide additional tools to:

- Support the implementation of the centre plan programme;
- Build a partnership between business and the Council;
- Improve the ongoing management of centres, and addressing local environmental and social issues;
- Promote investment in each centre;
- Foster local leadership;
- Enhance engagement between the Council, businesses and the community.

### POLICY 3.4

The Council's programme for public space and centres development will be regularly reviewed to ensure the priorities reflect and support the Council's Urban Development Strategy, and integrate with the following policies and plans:

- Centres Policy;
- Review of infill housing;
- Review of the Suburban Centre chapter of the District Plan;
- Public Space Design Policy;
- Central City Framework;
- Walking and Cycling Policies;
- Community Facilities Policy;
- Asset management plans and renewals programme.

### POLICY 3.5

New or upgraded community facilities and other public services should, wherever possible, be located in or on the edge of centres. Council will work with central government agencies to encourage the appropriate location of facilities such as schools, hospitals, health services and customer service centres.



## Objective 4 To manage the location of retail activities to ensure they support Wellington's compact urban form, provide for sustainable transport options and an efficient use of resources, and support the long-term vitality and viability of existing centres.

### APPROACH

The development of out-of-centre retail destinations has the potential to adversely affect the viability and vitality of existing centres. Although there has been limited development of this type in the city to date, there is considerable pressure, and opportunities will no doubt continue to emerge as 'windfall' sites come onto the market or as the economics of development changes.

Most out-of-centre retail activity comes with few of the co-location or added economic, environmental and social benefits presented by a mixed-use centre. Whilst they may offer a "price to market" advantage to consumers, due to their low land costs and lower operating costs, this is only one of a number of costs and benefits that have to be considered in assessing the appropriateness of such activities. On the cost side they generate increased total transport trips, higher use of private vehicles and consequent environmental impacts. If they are of sufficient scale, and depending on location, they can also threaten the viability and vitality of existing centres and devalue public spending on infrastructure in existing centres (ie. roads, public transport, public realm, community facilities, and streetscape enhancements). In some cases significant new retail developments may require additional infrastructure to support them at a cost to ratepayers – this can result in duplicated services and increased pressure on already stretched funding.

Retail that falls into the general merchandise category: hypermarkets, supermarkets or clothing and fashion categories, regardless of whether it is large-format or not, generates high levels of repeat visitation and can generate much greater economic, social and environmental benefits if it is located in a mixed-activity centre and co-located with other complementary or even competitive stores.

On the other hand, yard-based retail, trade-based retail and bulky goods retail generate infrequent visits as the purchase price is high and the goods for sale are often not consumables but capital assets. Stores selling these goods are by necessity of the product – large, requiring extensive building footprints, large servicing and car parking areas. They are often not suitable or viable to locate in centres, and an out-of-centre location can be justified.

#### POLICY 4.1

Any proposal for larger-scale retail development outside of a centre will not be supported unless it can demonstrate that it will:

- be able to be accessed by a variety of modes including public transport, walking and cycling;

- not generate significant adverse effects from trip patterns, travel demand and car use;
- not have significant adverse impacts on the economic performance and viability of existing centres; not require further direct or indirect investment in public infrastructure or facilities that cannot be funded from development contributions;
- not adversely impact either directly or indirectly on existing public infrastructure.

#### POLICY 4.2

Proposals for supermarkets (and hypermarkets selling fresh produce) will generally only be supported within or on the edge of existing centres.

#### POLICY 4.3

The Council has the following preferences for locating larger-format retail within the City:

Large Format Retail Activity	Locational Preferences	
	Centres	Work Areas Live/Work areas
(a) Yard-based activities (ie. building supplies, garden centres, car sales, agricultural supplies)		✓
(b) Trade suppliers (ie. tiles, paint, electrical supplies, plumbing supplies, catering supplies)	✓	✓
(c) Bulky comparison goods (ie. whiteware and appliances, furniture, office products, carpets, bedding)	✓	✓
(d) General merchandise (ie. supermarkets, hypermarkets, discount stores, department stores, homewares, clothing)	✓	

#### POLICY 4.4

Opportunities to establish a new large-format retail node (but excluding any 'General Merchandise' categories) will be investigated. This should be located on the edge of an existing centre where it can be accessible by a range of transport nodes and without affecting the long-term viability and vibrancy of the central city or existing town centres.

## **Objective 5** To support centres through targeting future residential growth in and around those centres identified as suitable for change due to good transport accessibility, suitable physical characteristics and lower sensitivity to changes to character.

### **APPROACH**

The review of infill housing has identified 'Areas of Change' where future residential intensification could occur over the next 50 years. All of these are based in and around centres because these areas offer the greatest benefits. Residential development can support the long-term viability and vitality of centres by increasing populations within areas within walking distance, increasing the number of people on the streets and using facilities and services, improving night-time safety, and maximising the utilisation of existing public transport networks.

#### **POLICY 5.1**

Residential development in all centres will be supported where it:

- Enhances the viability and vitality of the centre;
- Utilises upper floors of buildings;
- Maintains active ground-floor activities;
- Provides a secure and pleasant environment for the occupiers.

#### **POLICY 5.2**

Residential development within larger centres identified as 'Areas of Change' should be of a higher density and based on apartment typologies.

#### **POLICY 5.3**

Residential development in areas around centres and identified as 'Areas of Change' should be medium-density and be based on townhouse and unit typologies.





## Objective 6 To ensure there is a sufficient supply of land available for industrial activities to meet the long-term needs of the city.

### APPROACH

In the early 1990s the Council adopted a new approach to managing all of the centres outside of the central city. This created a single District Plan zoning (Suburban Centre) that applies to all of the city's centres (excluding the central city) as well as industrial areas and other mixed-use areas. The rules for this zone placed no restriction on activities, subject to compliance with basic environmental standards such as noise, glare, servicing and parking.

In some centres this zoning has facilitated a significant shift in the mix of activities. One of the most notable trends has been the move of residential and retail activities into areas previously dominated by commercial and industrial uses, where existing industrial activities 'lose out' to the highest and best land use activities.

Research undertaken for the Council has identified that the availability of industrial and employment land within Wellington City will be in short supply in the future and that there is a need to recognise that a broad range of industrial activities are not occurring in Wellington. Forecast projections indicate that there will be a substantial increase in land demand for industrial land of between 77–100 hectares over the 2007–2021 period – there is insufficient industrial land supplied within Wellington City to cater for this projected demand.

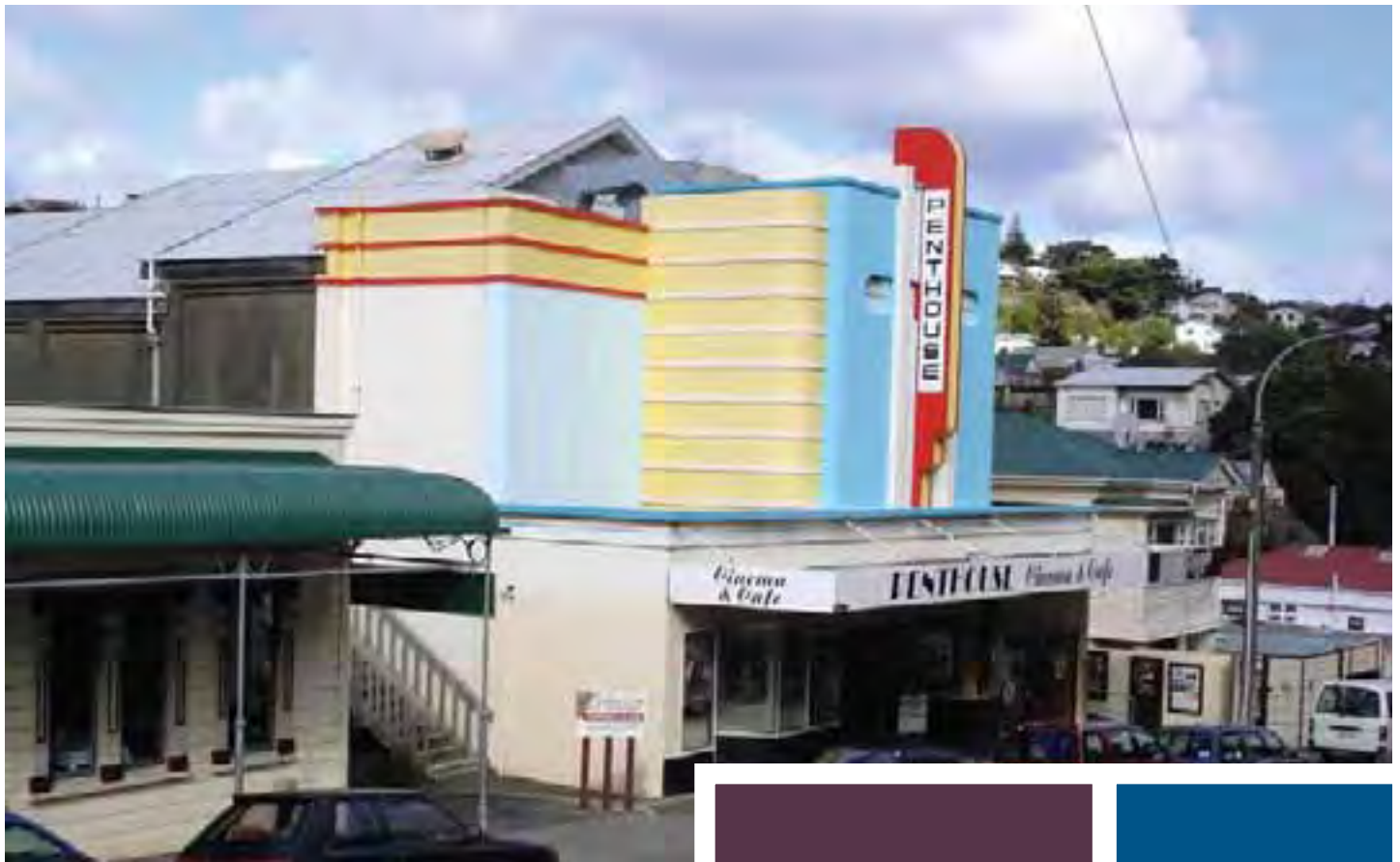
The existing market-led approach has the potential to restrict the growth of service industries which are critical in particular, to the overall economy of the city, and also affect the integrity and character of these traditionally industrial nodes.

### POLICY 6.1

Work Areas and Live Work Areas should not take on the role and functions of centres although a limited range of ancillary services that meet local needs and maximise accessibility may be appropriate.

### POLICY 6.2

The development of non-industrial uses in Work Areas will be controlled through the District Plan by limiting the scale and type of non-industrial use locating there.



## Objective 7 To improve the urban design quality of all centres and build on their sense of place.

### APPROACH

The only urban design assessment currently applicable to development in the Suburban Centre zone is for retail activities over 500m<sup>2</sup> (under Plan Change 52) and for multi-unit residential development. Consultation as part of the Suburban Centre review has revealed strong support (84% of respondents) for improving the quality of urban design in centres. Development in centres has a particular public prominence that deserves special attention and the design of buildings and spaces around them have a strong influence on the public realm where social interaction occurs. As such, it is proposed to widen the triggers for urban design assessment in centres and where possible to apply specific rules to improve outcomes. This broadly follows the approach taken in the central city (Plan Change 48).

Public feedback on the Draft Centres Policy highlighted again that there is strong support (78%) for the improvement of urban design quality of all centres through the development of a centres design guide and taking design into account in assessing resource consents for new developments.

### POLICY 7.1

The quality of urban design in centres will be improved by including in the District Plan:

- a Suburban Centres Design Guide;
- wider triggers for design assessment;
- requirements for 'active street frontages' (ie pedestrian access points, verandahs, glazing);
- requirements for the location and design of surface car parking;
- place-based plans (ie centre plans, urban design frameworks) to provide additional guidance to assessment;
- investigating and identifying heritage and character areas where appropriate.