

## WCC PDP – IHP – Stream 1 speaking notes

### Introduction and signposting

#### Generation Zero's purpose and history with PDP

- We're a youth-led organisation striving for a climate-just Aotearoa
- We have been interested the DP from the start; A City for People with Renters United.

#### Signpost:

- 1) The purpose of the NPS-UD and the analytical approach to take throughout the hearings.
- 2) The Johnsonville Line as rapid transit
- 3) Walkable catchments

### Purpose of the NPS-UD, analytical approach

#### *Understanding of planning → housing / climate crisis*

NZ and anglosphere, until relatively recently, the understanding that zoning and planning controls play a dominant role in housing affordability and urban emissions has only recently entered the mainstream.

Land-use is a massive reason why we have high urban emissions. Land-use & transport are two sides of same coin.

#### *Councils have blocked housing supply*

WCC's Current DP is the most restrictive, per capita, in Wellington's history.

Same for many other councils – see Infrastructure Commission's work.

Any lift in zoning capacity has been so small as to not make a difference.

Evidence has emerged from the Unitary Plan – upzoning (despite being flawed) has roughly doubled the rate of consenting of new builds. Rents have lowered in real terms.

#### *NPS-UD origin story*

Recognised that central government intervention is needed. Councils have adopted predatory participatory processes which have the effect of listening to the voices of a small slice of incumbent homeowners over the needs of the wider population and future generations.

Rising prices and rents should elicit a supply response – more and denser homes in good locations. Instead, a fixed supply through exclusionary zoning means that anything that contributes to demand bids up prices – lower interest rates, rising urban populations, higher incomes, small household sizes – and speculation runs rife.

A strong central direction – from all major political parties – is a natural democratic response to a failure of local planning.

### *Analytical approach*

Under the RMA, national direction occupies the highest tier of planning documents to have regard to.

The Interpretation Act, s 5: The meaning of an enactment must be ascertained from its text and in the light of its purpose.

At a high level, you have a straight forward analytical job when it comes to the NPS-UD policies. Apply them as written with a strong influence from its purpose and intent.

### *NPS-UD's objectives*

The NPS-UD clearly puts future residents, responsiveness to demand and emissions reductions as primary objectives:

“improve housing affordability by supporting competitive land and development markets.” Objective 2

New Zealand's urban environments should support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change. Objective 8.

New Zealand's urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations. Objective 4

MfE guidance is full of this.

### Cover off some broad points

- Population projections
  - Population is not the only driver of demand.
  - High rents and house prices, *in and of themselves*, imply a high level of demand for living in this City.
  - Submitters who wish to paint Wellington's population as stagnant or declining are not engaging in a robust forecast of reality, but instead reveal their own wishes.
- Māori interests
  - Decolonising and indigenising this city are vital to address historical land confiscation and suppression of culture.
  - We support current efforts in the PDP and support mana whenuas' submissions which we supported in further submissions.
- Happy to talk to both if time at the end:
  - Inclusionary zoning – or affordable housing
  - Local/community planning

### The Johnsonville Line as rapid transit

Our position is that we want the PDP to designate the Johnsonville Train Line as “rapid transit” (and its associated stations).

You have our submission so I will focus on a few key points.

- The definition of “rapid transit” is coloured by the purpose and intent of the NPS-UD – that points towards a permissive interpretation.
- Definition should be viewed wholistically and each element of the definition is not a hurdle – rather an indicator of rapid transit. Break it down:

Rapid transit means:

- a) Any existing **(yes)** OR planned public transport service
  - b) On a permanent route **(yes)**
  - c) That permanent route is largely separated from other traffic **(yes)**
  - d) Is frequent, quick, reliable and high-capacity **(yes – taken wholistically, future-focussed virtuous cycle, in light of purpose, each is indicator and not a hurdle)**
- Why is there even a “rapid transit” definition – with associated upzoning?
    - “rapid transit” is simply a *proxy / means* for allowing denser housing in well-functioning urban environments with good access, high demand and existing infrastructure. And indeed demand is extremely high alongside the line, with many mixed used urban villages crying out for more nearby customers, and an under-utilised rail line. The Western hills are a series of basins well above sea level and not on a fault line – new housing is extremely good here.
    - The existence of bus routes that may be faster to the Central City at certain times of day actually supports the Johnsonville line being “rapid transit”. It indicates a transit-rich area that is capable of supporting more housing.
    - The definition should be future-focussed, and not held hostage to the status quo. NPS-UD seeks to start a virtuous cycle where new housing begets better infrastructure and vice versa.
  - It would be absurd, after considering the NPS\_UD, to conclude that a railway line that serves high-price, high-demand suburbs merely a few kms from the heart of our capital city is not “rapid transit” and cannot not have more homes near it.

### Walkable catchments

Seek to increase the walkable catchment under the NPS-UD policy 3(c) from 10 to 15 minutes.

“walkable catchment” is not defined

You have our submission so I will focus on a few key points.

We choose not to go through the onerous factual debate on walkable catchments and instead looked at how commissioners should interpret all these factual submissions:

- Why has the NPS-UD used "walkable catchment"? – as a *proxy* for demand. Does not envisage that walking will be new residents' only or even dominant mode of transport.
- The exercise of defining what a “walkable catchment” is, is coloured by the intent and purpose of the NPS-UD – ie to maximise the benefits of intensification. Those locations are likely to have:
  - High amenity
  - Access
  - Community facilities
  - High demand
  - Low-emissions transport
  - this approach minimises the negative effects of new development (e.g. congestion)
  - creating a virtuous cycle of increased demand for good locations and infrastructure, leading to well-functioning urban environments.
- Therefore, “walkable catchment” under the NPS-UD is determined not just by the *ability* of someone to walk, but more importantly, is determined by the *amenities, benefits and demand for the destination*.
- PDP is out of step from other councils, which have far more hostile pedestrian environments than Wellington – famous for walking.
  - Auckland Council has applied the following walkable catchments to its plan change: A 15-minute walk (around 1200 metres) from the edge of the City Centre Zone
  - Hutt City Council has applied the following walkable catchments to its plan change: Within 1200 metres / 15 minutes of the City Centre;
- Remember: walking catchments can change – eg 20 mins for CC, 15 mins for metropolitan and rapid transit.

## Annex 1: Stream One content

### Matters related to proposed district plan and are beneficial to address upfront alongside strategic plan matters:

- Allocation of topics ISPP v Part One, Schedule One process
- Growth approach of intensification
- Classification of rapid transit service and stops under the NPS-UD;
- Size of walking catchments to implement NPS-UD Policy 3(c);
- Underutilised land and development capacity;
- Population projections;
- Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM);
- Climate change and nature-based solutions;
- Affordable housing;
- Māori interests/Papakāinga;
- Local/community planning; and