

Oral submission by Hilary Watson, Newtown. Stream One

I support:

- Newtown Residents' Association in their concern in the written submission around the impacts of: "specifying wide areas where developments of 6 storeys must be enabled, without prior investigation of the development capacity"
- Red Design Architects' and (Martin Hanleys') proposal to enable taller development in the Newtown character housing areas along Riddiford St
- I support the James Fraser's oral submission that Newtown's water infrastructure cannot deal with the densification proposed in the PDP
- I support Live Wellington's oral submission to this panel on Wellington City by Jane O'Loughlin that the proposed District Plan does not pay consideration to good urban design principles, preservation of amenity, character and green spaces, or resilience to natural disasters and climate change.
- I support Richard Norman's oral submission which reviews the impact of Capital value rating on underdeveloped land in the city.

I submit the following:

1. Density will work if it is focused and well-planned

One of the positive aspects of the NPS-UD is that it promotes the development of more compact and connected urban areas. Newtown will benefit from increased density within a carefully defined small walkable catchment zone near its main street. The PDP has over upzoned Newtown. The required density according to population projections can be achieved in areas in the main streets and one block from the main streets.

The population prediction figures don't support the need to upzone as much as 75 percent of the suburb which the PDP does.

"The city should make use of the legal tools available under the NPSUD (walkable catchments, qualifying matters) to limit high density development to more closely resemble forecast demand." See Jane's O'Loughlin's Live Wellington's oral submission.

Developers should not be given open slather to build six storeys and up on 75 percent of Newtown or it will lose its amenity, character and green spaces, as well as its resilience to natural disasters and climate change and neither will a compact and connected neighbourhood be created.

2. Take a step by step approach

Choose land that is currently under-utilised and suitable for high rise along the main road of the Newtown's shopping centre. Create incentives and use planning measures for development to go here as a first stage.

See photos Appendix 1

Adopt Red Design's plan for Newtown which puts high density along the main street of Newtown going one block only into the suburb. Their plan has enough dwellings for 2000 people when only 900 capacity is needed in the projections for Newtown. The main street currently, under the PDP is zoned Heritage rather than six stories which is limiting density. A carefully thought-out special town centre zone should be created to retain character and heritage while incorporating high density.

See Photos in Appendix 1

3. The PDP will contribute to protection of the environment if density is planned in areas that don't disturb existing houses and gardens.

Replacement of older houses with intense development will not just cause loss of amenity , sunlight, character and green areas but will incur a major risk of flooding because of inadequate infrastructure. See *James Fraser's oral submission on inadequate water infrastructure in Newtown.*

Newtown after 43 years of low-rise zoning has flourishing backyard gardens that soak up rain, provide shelter and shade, stabilise the soil, reduce heat and absorb and store carbon. See *Hilary Watson submission to PDP*

Internationally, there is a growing recognition and a trend to favouring the retention and adaption of older buildings instead of building new, due to the negative environmental impact of new buildings. Zealous upzoning will produce more emissions.

https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/apr/24/drive-for-net-zero-fuels-uk-boom-in-retrofitting-buildings-for-new-use?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

See photos Appendix 2

4. Create incentives to build on under-utilized land (brownfields)

If we are serious about reducing emissions, particularly in the near future, which scientists tell us is so crucial, we would be retaining existing buildings as much as possible and encouraging new developments in areas that are vacant, unplanted and under-utilized like large parts of Adelaide Road between John St and The Basin Reserve.

This would still fulfill the density required by the USPD without the bad effects of over-zoning Newtown's low rise character suburb.

In 2008 after thorough consultation with the community a vision of Adelaide road as a pleasant bustling high-rise residential area with green spaces, cafes, and retail was produced by the WCC . Nothing much has happened. The street is lined with commercial low-rise mainly car-related businesses.

The Wellington Company has just completed a beautiful new apartment block of 93 units but why would other developers follow suit under the proposed zoning if they can more easily acquire properties in 75 percent of Newtown and build six stories and upwards there?

WCC should use the NPSUD and zoning in the PDP to create incentives for development in places like Adelaide road and the main streets of Newtown. Land not built on and airspace not used should be taxed. See *Richard Norman's oral submission which reviews the impact of Capital value **rating on underdeveloped land** in the city.*

See photos Appendix 3 page 1, 2 and 3