

Draft Future Development Strategy – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Intermediate version

What is the draft Future Development Strategy?

The draft Future Development Strategy outlines a long-term vision for the growth and infrastructure needs of the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua region over the next 30 years. It addresses significant issues linked to future population growth, such as housing, business capacity, transportation, employment, environmental concerns, resilience against natural disasters, and optimal infrastructure utilization. This strategy serves the purpose of guiding land use decisions in the region and informs the development plans of local councils through various planning documents.

Why is a Future Development Strategy important?

Over the next 30 years, our region is expected to welcome an additional 200,000 residents, nearly the population of Wellington City. We must plan for where these future generations and newcomers will live, work, and enjoy their lives. The decisions we make about growth significantly impact the well-being of our communities, towns, cities, and the natural surroundings we cherish.

How does the public provide input on the draft Future Development Strategy?

The draft strategy is open for public feedback from October 9, 2023, to November 9, 2023. We encourage community members to share their thoughts. Following this period, a subcommittee of the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee (WRLC) will assess the feedback and consider amendments. The final strategy will be presented for adoption in March 2024, accompanied by an Implementation Plan.

Who developed the draft Future Development Strategy?

In the Wellington region, certain councils, including Greater Wellington, Wellington City, Porirua, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, and Kāpiti Coast councils, are legally mandated to prepare a Future Development Strategy due to their status as fast-growing cities or districts. In this case, the FDS also covers the Wairarapa councils and Horowhenua District Council. To facilitate collaboration between local councils, WRLC iwi members, and central government agencies, the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee (WRLC) was established as an "urban growth partnership." These partnerships align decision-making processes and enhance coordination in housing, land use, and infrastructure planning, serving as a vital tool for collaborative action.

How was the draft Future Development Strategy developed?

The strategy is informed by various factors, including the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (HBA), consideration of different spatial scenarios, Long-Term Plans, and input from stakeholders such as iwi partners, developers, and infrastructure providers. It also takes into account national-level policies related to housing, transportation, emissions reduction, climate adaptation, coastal management, urban development, productive land use, and indigenous biodiversity. Public feedback and perspectives will further shape the final strategy.

Why do we need this Future Development Strategy?

Planning for the future is crucial, given our changing circumstances and our vision for what lies ahead. The previous framework, the Wellington Regional Growth Framework (WRGF), was nearing completion when the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) became effective in August 2020. The WRGF was not intended to fulfill the requirements of a Future Development Strategy. Thus, we needed to adapt and create this new strategy to align with the NPS-UD and address emerging challenges related to housing, business, infrastructure, and climate change adaptation.

How is the region expected to grow over 30 years?

Over the next three decades, the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua region is anticipated to experience significant growth, with an estimated 200,000 additional residents by 2053. To accommodate this, we will need approximately 99,000 new homes. These population projections are based on extensive demographic analysis.

Why is it important to manage this growth?

Strategic management of regional development allows us to leverage the region's opportunities and benefits effectively. By planning for more homes near workplaces, services, and transportation hubs, we can reduce the need for extensive commuting, enhance climate resilience, and lower emissions. Providing infrastructure where it's needed and at the right times supports sustainable growth.

What's the approach to Greenfields growth?

Greenfield development remains a part of our regional strategy to offer housing choices. However, we have enabled substantial growth within our existing towns and cities, reducing the need for extensive greenfield development compared to previous expectations. We continue to invest in greenfield areas but also conduct thorough assessments of their risks, impacts, and transportation implications. This ensures that development aligns with safety and environmental goals.

Where does the Future Development Strategy propose future growth?

The draft strategy prioritizes growth in existing towns and cities, particularly in areas important to iwi, along major public transportation corridors, within designated Priority Development Areas, around current and future public transportation nodes, and well-connected greenfield developments close to existing urban areas. The aim is to create well-designed, resilient urban environments.

What role does the draft Future Development Strategy play alongside other council plans?

The Future Development Strategy supersedes the Wellington Regional Growth Framework and serves as the overarching vision for accommodating growth and infrastructure investment over the next 30 years. Each council has its own planning rules, and these will need to align with the strategy. Additionally, an Implementation Plan will be developed to guide specific actions and investments.

How does the draft Future Development Strategy relate to other plans, like Plan Change 1?

The Future Development Strategy focuses on housing and business growth, while Plan Change 1 addresses the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management. Plan Change 1 implements recommendations from regional processes, and it deals with regulatory aspects, such as resource consents. Land use developments consistent with the Future Development Strategy may still require resource consents as per Plan Change 1.

How does the draft Future Development Strategy relate to local district plans, like the Draft Lower Hutt District Plan?

The Future Development Strategy aligns with the National Policy Statement on Urban Development, guiding long-term planning for housing and business capacity. The Draft Lower Hutt District Plan is part of Hutt City Council's ongoing review of its District Plan, providing

insights into the direction of the proposed District Plan. Hutt City Council must consider the Future Development Strategy during its District Plan review.

What about the Proposed Combined Wairarapa District Plan?

The Future Development Strategy guides long-term strategic planning for housing and business capacity. The Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan is a regulatory document required by the Resource Management Act, and it must align with the Future Development Strategy. The strategy has influenced zoning, rules, and standards in the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan, which will be open for public feedback later this year.

What's the impact of private plan changes from developers?

The Resource Management Act allows developers to seek changes to council district plans through private plan change applications. These changes can be challenging, especially when they affect areas slated for future development. However, the draft Future Development Strategy prioritizes certain areas for investment, and these priorities will be followed through funded programs. The strategy also aims to strengthen the decision-making framework for private plan changes in future urban areas.

What if central government changes planning rules that conflict with the Future Development Strategy?

Planning for 30 years is challenging due to potential policy changes. However, the Future Development Strategy represents our collective vision and priorities for development. It balances building up and some building out to provide easier access to essential places, reduce emissions, and protect our environment, regardless of national policy.

Additional Questions for Call Centre use (do not publish)

What are “15-minute Cities” all about?

This is an urban planning concept simply about building more compact, walkable communities where people are less reliant on cars. Sometimes this concept can use different measures such as 20 minutes. The idea being that you can obtain your daily needs without the use of your car. This creates more livable communities. No one is being told where to live or forced not to use their car. Being able to walk places creates healthy cities. People who walk in their neighbours are more connected with their local community. Streets can be safe when they are full of activity. Reduce air pollution.

Are you making everyone live in 'shoeboxes'? Will we be living like Hong Kong? And similar questions

We often think of home as sitting on it's in small block of land. But with a growing population we need to think differently about fitting everyone in. It's not just about packing everything in we need to build better too. If all your shops and schools are within walking distance and you can use public transportation that's more sustainable way of building a city. No more new buildings spreading across our natural areas. It's a way of ensuring greens areas are maintained and protected for future generations.