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Regional Council input into city and district council planning

1. Purpose

To inform Councillors of Greater Wellington's input into the statutory resource management processes of territorial authorities in the region for the period 9 May 2011 to 20 June 2011.

2. Background

Greater Wellington's interest arises from the Council's responsibilities for regional planning and the integrated management of natural and physical resources in the Wellington region.

3. City and District Council plan changes

Territorial Authority	Status of Document	Name of Document	Main issues	Action
Hutt City Council	Proposed	Proposed Plan Change 22 Kelso Grove Rezoning to General Residential Activity Area	Potential impacts on areas of significant indigenous biodiversity	Submission
		Proposed Plan Change 21: 54 Oakleigh St, Maungaraki Rezoning to General Residential Activity Area	GW Parks concerns with effects on access to the Belmont Regional Park	Further submissions in support of 3 submitters

4. Notified Resource Consents

Territorial Authority	Applicant	Name of Document	Main issues	Action
South Wairarapa District Council	J Priest	Seven lot rural subdivision , 2805 Cape Palliser Rd	Potential hazard from debris flows from streams, archaeological features and effects on natural character of the coastal environment	Submission
Wellington City Council	General Distributors Limited	To construct and operate a Countdown supermarket on the site with a gross floor area of	Management of stormwater and effects on the integration of public	Submission

Territorial Authority	Applicant	Name of Document	Main issues	Action
		approximately 4,200m2 at 3 Main Rd, Tawa	transport	
Wellington City Council	John and Mary Josephine Walsh	14 Lot subdivision and one house per lot and associated earthworks 180 & 185 Bing Lucas Drive, Tawa	Management of stormwater and protection of significant indigenous vegetation	Submission
Wellington City Council	KS Exchange JV Ltd	Construct and occupy a Central Area building known as 'Kate Sheppard Exchange' at 2-18 Lambton Quay and 3-19, 19 and 19A Kate Sheppard Place, Wellington Central (including part of the Lambton Transport Interchange).	Impacts on the public transport network	Evidence provided to hearing. (see below)

4.1 Kate Sheppard Exchange

GW's submission on the application to construct and occupy this building identified concerns with the effects on the Lambton bus interchange and on the wider public transport network. GW provided evidence at the hearing. The Commissioners requested that a meeting be convened between parties to determine the information needed to address the issues identified by GW and NZ Bus and in order to make a full assessment of the effects on the interchange and public transport network.

At a meeting held on 16th June, between WCC, GW, NZ Bus and the applicant, it was agreed that a full assessment on the effects of the proposed development on the interchange and public transport network had not been undertaken. The applicant agreed that this assessment was necessary and would lead it with expert assistance provided by GW Public Transport, WCC and NZ Bus. GW reported back to the hearing panel on Monday 20th June. The hearing process is on-going.

5. Central Government Documents

5.1 Proposed National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry

A technical submission has been provided to the Ministry for the Environment on details around the Erosion Susceptibility Classification and the activity status being proposed for forestry activities in the Proposed National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry. The Ministry for the Environment is now reviewing these submissions.

5.2 Building Sustainable Cities

Greater Wellington submitted on the document *Building Competitive Cities – Reform of Urban Planning and Infrastructure* in December 2010. The key points of our submission were: -

- Spatial plans can be used as a mechanism for engagement between central government and regions developing spatial plans. Central government is a major investor in infrastructure (education, health, roads, utilities etc), and any investment decisions have the potential to redistribute jobs and population growth. These decisions need to be considered with an understanding of their spatial context, and their impact on the development of a region. It is vital therefore that central government be an active partner in spatial planning.
- While we agree that there are difficulties in achieving long-term, efficient and integrated planning and urban design outcomes we question whether this is because the urban environment has not been adequately recognised in the RMA. Planning for the urban environment may be enhanced through changes to provisions in the RMA, however, any consideration of the options should include a wider scope than just the RMA, and would need to include increased linkages between various Acts.
- The plan development process under the RMA is a lengthy process, often due to the time taken to resolve appeals. Greater Wellington is concerned that options to improve the plan development process were considered during Phase I of the RMA reforms, but not progressed. We believe that options for improvement to the plan development process to reduce the time and cost of plan changes should be reconsidered and progressed.
- Greater Wellington is a requiring authority for designations for regional infrastructure assets of water supply, flood protection and harbour management. We consider that the existing designation process generally provides for our needs as both a requiring authority and a regulatory authority. It is vital that our use of designations, particularly where Greater Wellington does not own the land, is not overlooked in any proposed changes.

The Minister recently released a statement on the progress of this document. In total, almost 300 submissions were received. Cabinet has directed the Ministry for the Environment to continue work on this topic. Decisions will be made on proposals for a National Policy Statement, in order to give greater recognition to the urban environment (including urban design and housing affordability considerations). It has been indicated that further policy recommendations will follow in 2012.