

22 December 2020

Andy Foster, Wellington City Mayor

Councillors Iona Pannett, Tamatha Paul, Nicola Young – Pukehinau/Lambton Ward

Barbara McKerrow, Wellington City Chief Executive

Liam Hodgetts, Chief City Planner

Alternative Housing Plan for Mount Victoria

As you will be aware a large number of Mt Victoria residents expressed concerns regarding the potential impacts of the draft spatial plan

- 754 people (50% owners and 50% renters) signed the petition opposing the plan
- 305 Mount Victoria residents made submissions, the vast majority highlighting concerns with the plan.

Common points from Mt Victoria submissions are:

- We are concerned, like most New Zealanders, about housing affordability and availability
- We support increased density, but it must be implemented with concepts of density done well embedded into design and development rules. Mt Victoria is already one of New Zealand's densest suburbs
- We are concerned that the spatial plan, in its current state will only result in the demolition of heritage homes to be replaced by unaffordable housing developments. These heritage properties include multi-unit rentals which currently offer affordable accommodation for less affluent residents of Mt Victoria, as well as vulnerable members of our community
- We consider that maintaining the heritage and character of Mt Victoria is vitally important to both residents and Wellington City and that the spatial plan will do irreparable damage to the heritage and character of Mt Victoria. Once it has gone, it has gone forever!
- We are concerned that the spatial plan could effectively disenfranchise residents who will be adversely affected by multi-storey developments and are keen to be involved in finding solutions that will protect the special character of the Mt Victoria and also maintain a healthy engaged community.

Unfortunately, feedback from many Mt Victorians who made oral submissions was that they did not feel confident that councillors were ready to listen to them. Some felt that the hearing process would not provide a safe environment, so chose not to make an oral submission. Consequently, it was decided that further co-ordinated action was needed to ensure that the value of our submissions is properly considered.

To address these concerns and co-ordinate our approach, we have established a Mt Victoria Residents' Planning Group comprising representatives of Mt Victoria Residents Association, the Mount Victoria Historical Society and a range of interested parties from the Mt Victoria community.

We note and welcome Council mention of the attractiveness of co-design as a way to progress planning. The Mt Victoria Residents' Planning Group will develop a workable alternative plan for Mt Victoria. We consider that there are ways to address the objectives of the spatial plan that will

provide for the necessary quality dwelling density over time without destroying Mt Victoria's heritage and character. In this regard we favour a phased approach to increasing density, focussing on areas which can and should be developed first, with potential extensions as evidence of forecast growth becomes firmer. We note that any plan needs to provide for supporting infrastructure and green space in alignment with WHO standards. We also want to ensure that the plan does not result in the replacement of large pre- 1930 multi-unit houses and boarding houses with middle class apartments.

We have been advised that Council staff have revised their estimates of the number of additional dwellings that will be required in Mount Victoria in the 30 years covered by the plan and that they are now projecting that 92-188 more dwellings will be required for Mt Victoria. This would equate an average of 3 – 6 more dwellings each year. To ensure we are using the most up to date numbers we would appreciate confirmation of these numbers.

We aim to have a draft plan ready for consultation with Mt Victoria residents by mid-February 2021. Once we have received feedback and support from Mount Victoria residents we will seek an opportunity to present the plan to Wellington City Planners and Wellington City Councillors.

We are keen to work with the Council to achieve a Win-Win solution that will have both residents and Council support. The Council will be able to show that it has worked with the community to come up with a scheme that both addresses residents' concerns and achieves the objectives of the spatial plan, in alignment with the requirements of the RMS and the NPS-UD.

We look forward to productive engagement with WCC as we prepare the plan for Mount Victoria. We would appreciate it if the Council could nominate key individuals in Council Planning who can work with us to progress this.

Seasons greetings

Angela Rothwell, Mount Victoria Residents Association

Jo Newman, Mount Victoria Historical Society

Rob Brown, Convenor, Mount Victoria Planning Group

Hutia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea te komako e ko?

If you pull the heart out of the flaxbush, where will the bellbird sing?