

5. Reduce Development Potential in Some Areas

Council proposes to reduce or remove the potential for housing development in more sensitive environments, such as areas of land that are likely to flood and hillsides; or land which is difficult to provide with urban services.

There are two significant areas where Council proposes to reduce or remove the potential to develop for conventional urban housing.

Gillespies Road/Teasdale

Approximately 250 hectares of land is zoned Residential at the end of Gillespies Road, extending up the hill behind the Akatarawa Cemetery and towards Crest Road.

The current zoning does not accurately reflect the practical development potential of the area. Parts of this area are very steep in topography, while other parts are subject to potential flooding by the Hutt River. The higher and flatter land will be difficult to service because of the terrain and distance from Council services.

Council proposes to review the quantity of land zoned for Residential purposes, reducing the area of Residential-zoned land to that area of the valley floor that is above the 1 in 100 year floodplain of the Hutt River. This is shown in the photograph opposite.

Council proposes that the developer of the remaining Residential area prepare a Structure Plan for the total area, showing the housing capacity, road access, placement of infrastructural services and open spaces prior to granting approval to subdivide.

Council proposes to re-zone the balance of this land as Rural Lifestyle. Rural Lifestyle zoning permits on average one dwelling per hectare, and housing would not be connected to the Council water supply or wastewater schemes.

The map following shows the three areas, indicatively:

- Residential Zone to be retained as Residential
- Hutt River Floodplain
- Balance of the area to be re-zoned as Rural Lifestyle.



Southern Hills

Local residents consistently identify the hills surrounding the urban valley as a key feature to the city's character and identity.

The hills to the south of the urban valley, extending from Pinehaven and the Blue Mountains through to Kingsley Heights and Mount Marua, form an important visual backdrop to the city. Much of the hills are tree-clad, and housing is generally dispersed. The ridgelines have already been protected in the District Plan, although there are limited rules for their protection. The analysis of environmental constraints also shows that parts of these hillsides are steep, potentially prone to erosion and there is a fire risk. Road access may be difficult to form, and building sites often require a lot of earthworks.

Under the existing District Plan, a range of zonings have been applied to these hills, including Residential, Residential Hill, Residential Conservation, Rural Lifestyle, Rural Hill and Open Space. Consequently, minimum lot sizes for subdivision vary from 400m² to 20 hectares.

Council proposes to review the zonings and development standards for all of this area, identifying which areas are appropriate for development and what standards should apply to protect the environment. Council does not intend to remove the ability to develop this land altogether, rather it is looking to balance the potential to develop for housing against the potential impacts of any such development, to ensure that housing is appropriate to the site, visibly unobtrusive and does not adversely affect other properties.

Council proposes to review the zoning provisions and development standards set out in the District Plan for the hills surrounding the main urban valley, to ensure that housing will be located on suitable parts of the hillside, and that these areas are developed with great sensitivity to the environment.

6. Housing Potential

Council currently does not propose to make major changes to housing standards throughout the rest of the urban area. Currently, the following minimum standards will continue to apply in the Residential and Residential Conservation zones:

RESIDENTIAL MINIMUM SUBDIVISION REQUIREMENTS

| | Front Lots | Rear Lots | Corner Lots | Averaging |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Minimum Net Site Area | 400m ² | 400m ² | 450m ² | NA |
| Minimum Frontage | 6 metres | NA | 6 metres | |
| Shape Factor | 12 metres | 12 metres | 12 metres | |

RESIDENTIAL CONSERVATION MINIMUM SUBDIVISION REQUIREMENTS

| | Front Lots | Rear Lots | Corner Lots | Averaging* |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Minimum Net Site Area | 750m ² | 900m ² | 750m ² | 650m ² with average of 750m ² |
| Minimum Frontage | 6 metres | NA | 6 metres | |
| Shape Factor | 17 metres | 17 metres | 17 metres | |

* AVERAGING

The minimum site area may be reduced to the area shown in the Averaging Column, provided that not more than 25% of the allotments in the subdivision are reduced to between 650m² and 750m² and the average minimum site areas as specified are maintained.

However, as a result of submissions to the draft Strategy, a review of infill subdivision standards and of bulk and location standards will be undertaken to ensure that the current standards are achieving a suitable result, and a level of residential amenity desirable to the community.

Provision for access is excluded from the net site area calculation. Typically, any Residential section larger than 860m², or Residential Conservation section of 1800m² may be subdivided, subject to meeting other standards in the District Plan.

Council proposes to make it a little easier to undertake well-designed comprehensive residential developments of three or more homes. The activity status of such developments in the District Plan may be changed from discretionary to controlled where the developer is able to clearly demonstrate that their development proposal addresses the seven elements of good urban design. As it is now economically viable to move a house as part of an infill subdivision, it is possible that comprehensive developments may become more popular.

7. Identify New Areas for Housing

Council will identify significant new areas for residential development to commence over the next few years. These areas must be identified now because:

- A comprehensive approach needs to be taken, looking at the whole area and how it integrates with the existing urban area. This includes looking at key access links, open space networks and where different activities are best located.
- Planning for key infrastructure needs to start as soon as possible for physical development to be able to commence within the next few years.
- Proposals for new capital works will need to be consulted on as part of the process of preparing Council's Long Term Council Community Plan.

Council proposes to identify and provide for significant new areas of residential development at Wallaceville, Pinehaven and Maymorn.

In identifying these areas for future residential growth, Council considered all areas beyond the urban fringe with regard to the following criteria:

- Site topography
- Environmental constraints
- Access
- Urban services
- Special features

The three areas selected were considered to be the most suitable for development over the next 20 years. This wider analysis is outlined in the Background Section, Analysis of Options – Future Residential Expansion.

Choice in Urban Housing



Wallaceville

Part of the AgResearch site at Wallaceville is well suited to development of medium to higher density housing.

The site is already within the urban footprint of Upper Hutt, it is flat and within very easy walking distance of the Wallaceville Train Station and reasonably close to the Upper Hutt city centre. Much of the site is undeveloped, being farmed as part of the animal research centre.

The site is capable of being serviced for urban development, though because of its flat nature, alternative ways of managing stormwater may need to be considered.

As this would be a completely new development, innovation in design is possible, and slightly higher densities of housing may be catered for as part of a comprehensive development where houses, open spaces and access are well integrated.

This land is currently designated for animal research, and has an underlying Special Activities zone. The zone change for the new residential area is considered by Council to be a high priority, and could be commenced in 2008.

The area proposed for medium-high density housing is shown on the photograph opposite.

The map of the zoning proposed for the overall site is shown in the earlier section, Development Opportunity – AgResearch Wallaceville.

Guildford, Pinehaven



The Guildford area extends along the south-western hills behind Pinehaven, from Silverstream Spur, the Council-owned land beyond the end of Kiln Street, towards Avro and Avian Roads in the Blue Mountains.

This area has long been established as a pine plantation, and covers an area of approximately 300 ha. The Guildford Timber Company, who own much of this land, do not intend to replant this area in commercial pine forest.

Their vision is to develop the higher and flatter land above Pinehaven into a unique residential lifestyle development, designed to the highest standards. The proposal is at a conceptual stage only, and could involve clusters of housing interspersed with trees, retaining the green backdrop of the hills and being visually unobtrusive from Pinehaven and Silverstream. The development proposed would be staged over 20 or more years.

This development would have direct access from Silverstream and would clearly link into the Upper Hutt community. Potentially, the new road created would link through to the Blue Mountains /Whiteman's Valley area. This could enable urban development of the upper Whiteman's Valley area in 20-50 years time, as urban services could be sized to accommodate any such longer term growth. If future urban development potential is seen as possible here, it is much more cost effective to start laying these services now, rather than retrofitting new pipelines in the future.

Council will listen to the community's views on whether infrastructure for the Guildford area should be sized for just this development, or with additional capacity to enable the longer term development of a much larger area. Council will require a structure plan to be provided by the developer before this project can proceed to physical development.

Council could begin preparatory work for a plan change for the Guildford area in 2008.

Maymorn

Maymorn is regionally the most significant area of land within Upper Hutt for future urban development, possibly for the next 30 or more years.

The Maymorn area is currently developed as farmland, interspersed with rural lifestyle, residential and some industrial development. It is relatively flat, with streams draining from the south-east into the Mangaroa River, to the north-west. The river and surrounding hills create a natural limit to urban settlement.

Historically, Maymorn has experienced waves of urban development and retreat. In the 1940s, the Defence Forces based a camp in the vicinity of Alamein Road and a number of storage facilities across the valley, some of which are still evident today. A railway settlement was developed in the 1950s in the vicinity of Old School Road for those working on construction of the Rimutaka Rail Tunnel. Many of the houses have since been removed, some have been relocated and others remain on their original foundations. Parts of the valley are serviced by the Council reticulated water supply and wastewater systems.

The Wellington-Wairarapa Railway bisects the lower valley, with passenger trains to Masterton and Wellington stopping at the Maymorn Rail Station. It takes about 45 minutes to travel by express train to Wellington.

The area is close to State Highway 2, with direct access via Maymorn Road and Mangaroa Hill Road, and less direct access via Wallaceville Hill Road and Whiteman's Valley Road. The area is within 30 minutes drive of the Wellington Central Business District, and within 10 minutes drive of the Upper Hutt city centre.

The Maymorn Train Station is currently being developed as the base for the Rimutaka Incline Railway Heritage Trust's long term project to re-establish operation of fell engines on the former railway over the Rimutakas. This centre may become an increasingly strong visitor



attraction as work on the project progresses. This base could provide a focus for urban development.

Council proposes to prepare a structure plan for the new urban area, in collaboration with the community and developers. The structure plan will identify the main areas for housing and business activities, the main roads, the network of parks, reserves and community facilities, any heritage or tree features to be protected, the scale and approximate number of new homes to be created, and the location of the main water and waste services. The structure plan will also identify the way in which urban development would be staged.

The structure plan may take two or more years to develop, and would be completed before any plan change is proposed to enable urban development. In the interim period, existing rural zoning rules will continue to be applied, and, in assessing any proposal for subdivision, Council will have regard to the layout and its potential impact on urban development.

8. Find Ways to Keep Housing Affordable

Council proposes to work with central government, other agencies and the private sector to provide good quality lower cost homes at various locations throughout the city. Housing affordability is a significant national issue at present and work at central government level such as the Affordable Housing Bill is currently occurring.

One of Council's main ways of doing this is to ensure that a good supply of suitable land is available for new housing development, ensuring that land prices do not become distorted by supply shortages. Generally, flatter land is easier to develop and therefore often cheaper overall to build on so the release of new land on the AgResearch Wallaceville site, and the future development proposed for Maymorn is intended to assist in keeping housing affordable for the average family.

Council could also introduce regulations and/or incentives to develop lower cost homes. For example:

- Subdividers may be required to provide 10-25% of the subdivided lots at affordable rather than premium prices.
- Comprehensive residential developments of 1 and 2-bedroom homes could be allowed more flexibility in design to fit more homes on the same area of land.
- Incentives might be provided [eg rates relief] for a limited period after construction of affordable homes.

Community feedback will be important in guiding the extent to which Council becomes involved in these initiatives.

Energy Efficient Housing

Council will also work with central government and other agencies to ensure more housing is healthy and energy efficient. Over the past year, Council has developed a Healthy and Safe Cities Strategy, and a recent project has involved facilitating the retrofitting of energy efficient improvements to housing in Timberlea.