

PC50 Residential Focus Group – Meeting 2 Notes



28 NOV 2019, 7-9PM – ROTARY LOUNGE, UPPER HUTT LIBRARY

Meeting began by introducing everyone and share what their overall motivations and expectations were, as a means for new members to get to know one another.

Council officers asked members whether they had any additional feedback from the last meeting or the material that was circulated. Members discussed that Land Use Strategy (LUS) and their motivations, saying:

- The LUS is silent on affordable rental housing for people who can't afford to buy.
 - Officers stated that Council is developing an 'affordable housing strategy' and main role is as a facilitator of conversation between Govt. and local agencies / groups working in this space. Council at this stage doesn't see its role as a housing provider.
- Current buyers are not from Upper Hutt, but are attracted here because of the accessibility of open space and recreational opportunities. PC50 therefore needs to maintain these values.
- Members asked whether there would be more consideration for a second dwelling on a site, as people want multigenerational living.
 - There are large sections with vacant proportions that could fit another house on there.
 - Greater density is needed. Wilford Street was used as a good example of higher density living, but sold for over \$700k. Prices are still unaffordable. The boundaries of higher density living [Centres Overlay] needs to increase as this currently doesn't make sense.
 - Officers noted that current national policy regulation means that Council could consider 'out of zone' developments more easily and each site would be evaluated on its own merits.

Officers provided a summary of the feedback received in the last meeting regarding what 2070 could look like. Additional feedback received included:

- A greater range of housing types are needed, with more 1-2 bedroom homes for retirees and couples.
- Good quality units, like a Company Share, can be a way of reducing the cost of housing.

An overview of the planning process was provided by Council officers, covering the influence of national policy and Councils' discretion through the RMA. This was followed by an overview of Land Use Strategy (LUS) values that relate to the urban area that form part of the outcomes of Plan Change 50. This involved looking at the intensification areas identified in the LUS and providing an overview of their current densities and what an increase in density could look like, including increasing the number of houses and decreasing allotment sizes. Officers asked members what they thought needed to be considered when enabling this form of intensification. Feedback received from members included:

- Developers should be required to provide open space or green space as part of any future greenfield development.

- Prestons Road in Christchurch was used as an example that did this well. The space also reflects local heritage and cultural values, which increased people's connection to the area.
- New higher density developments should be sympathetic to the environment, avoiding homogenous developments where every block is the same. The development pattern should be mixed, for example, having high density on one side of the street and lower density on the other. This is also a way to create mixed communities.
- Members had mixed views as to what 'quality housing' looking like and acknowledged that people have different sets of values and needs, and each will choose housing which best aligns with these. This means that there isn't just one perfect housing typology.
- Members told stories of people struggling to afford their rent, let alone buying a house. Prices keep increasing and affordability is a real issue for people.
- Members also queried whether three waters infrastructure would be addressed (drinking, waste, and storm water).
 - Officers noted that this is being looked at through the regional Whaitua Process and more direction is expected at the national policy level. It was noted that some of these engineering controls may come in to force before Plan Change 50 is complete, remembering that the HBA evaluates the current state of infrastructure.
- Members also stated that having an all-girls school would be a great addition to Upper Hutt, as there are currently only all-boys and single-sex schools. The result is that girls leave the district as girls attend schools outside of the district and become part of that community instead. It was also acknowledged that there is still a choice where to send children to school and there were good co-ed schools available in Upper Hutt.

Things to think about for next meeting:

- Where do you believe are the sensitive urban areas where increased urban development may not be as suitable as other areas?
- Are there any fringe rural issues that you would like to discuss with the Rural Focus Group if we have the chance to meet with them next year?