

Submission to WCC Long Term Plan

May 2021

Who are we:

An Association that represents the Residents in the Te Aro and Wellington Central, while recognising 'our space' is also the space used by business, workers, and visitors. This area has become the largest residential suburb in Wellington in terms of population - on the smallest land area.

Our purpose:

To be a progressive and influential voice for our members through engagement with the appropriate public authorities to enhance the wellbeing of those living in the inner-city.

Area of interest:

To achieve a sustainable living environment in the inner-city through adherence to UN Sustainable Development Goals, and proactively working to enhance Democratic Resilience through co-design and civic engagement.

Inner City Wellington (ICW) recognises the difficult financial situation that provides the context for the Plan.

In general, we agree with the priorities identified. However, we note that the following items are still under review and have not been factored into the plan.

- Three waters reform and water metering
- Additional LGWM investment
- Social Housing financial sustainability options
- Strategic review of community infrastructure investments
- Divestment programme

Decisions on these major issues could have significant impact for other items in the plan, so it seems somewhat pointless to focus on detail.

ICW is concerned at the number of items where there is no budget allocated during the term of the plan but would not raise any of them above the absolute priority of fixing our infrastructure.

We assume identification of the items in the plan means that if/as funding might become available, they will be reconsidered for allocations.

In this submission, ICW wishes to only emphasise the following key points.

These are:

- **Infrastructure must be the top priority, including ownership of wastewater lateral pipes and introducing technology at Moa Point to deal with sludge.**
- **We support increasing debt levels as suggested to ensure work on the Central Library can proceed swiftly as the level proposed is still within an acceptable range and is not envisaged to be maintained beyond the Library project.**

- **We support demolishing MOB and CAB - only if the footprint of any new building allows for an increase in public and green space within the precinct.**
- **ICW supports the continuation of the Building Resilience Fund (\$0.5m)**

The Building Resilience Fund provides Wellington ratepayers (owners) in potentially earthquake-prone buildings and earthquake-prone buildings with some financial assistance through the grants to progress work that determines the status of the building and feeds into the owners' decision about what action to take to comply with the earthquake-prone notice requirements. The fund is recognition by WCC that owners face substantial costs to investigate the options before the strengthening or demolition work can even begin. It recognises that some owners face additional pressures due to a priority building status. It recognises that these buildings provide homes for owner-occupiers and tenants, and commercial units for small businesses across Wellington - all an essential part of Wellington's living environment and commercial infrastructure.

That the fund is under-subscribed is largely due, in our view, to the narrow criteria of activities that will be funded. Many multi-owner earthquake-prone apartment buildings have completed the eligible activities but are still facing additional costs to get to a position of making a decision or beginning the work. ICW requests that the Council committee and Council reconsiders the officers' recommendation for an expansion of the criteria in December 2020. ICW believes this would increase the number of applications.

ICW continues to lobby central government for a review of the legislation with respect to multi-owner residential buildings to review the policy basis for the compliance burden placed on home-owners. This is increasingly urgent given the review of the National Seismic Hazard Model due to be completed mid-2022, the likelihood of changes to the building standard as a result, and that there is no certainty being given by the Minister that strengthened buildings will not be impacted by new, and higher, standards. This uncertainty has implications for WCC's spatial planning and densification direction.

ICW continues to lobby central government for an effective implementation advisory and support service for those owners progressing projects and financial recognition of the scale of the costs incurred by owners to comply with legislated requirements retrospectively applied to compliant buildings. ICW calls on WCC to support these actions.

ICW thanks you for the opportunity to present this submission and advises we do not wish to make an oral submission.

Yours sincerely



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CHAIR ICW

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