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## District Plan review needed to curb future housing shortage

A report released on future housing demand shows that without action, Wellington city will face a shortfall of between 4,600 and 12,000 dwellings by 2047. The report takes a region wide view of housing and business capacity based on predicted population growth for Wellington, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua and Kapiti.

Wellington Mayor Andy Foster says that the figures come as no surprise.

“We know that more people want to make Wellington home so we are mid-way through a project that looks specifically at how and where our city can grow, without compromising those things that make us unique,” he says.

Earlier this year Wellington City Council put four different growth scenarios to the community, and the results show that people have a strong preference for restricting growth to the central city and existing suburbs. There was little support for any green field development outside those areas already identified for growth, to avoid sprawl and more cars on the road.

“There is high awareness of the impact growth can have on the sustainability of the city,” Mayor Foster says.

“In Wellington, 80 percent of new homes over recent years have been built in existing urban areas.

“Compact cities are more walkable, bikeable and allow higher public transport use. This is crucial to reduce energy use and carbon emissions.

“The things people love most about living here is our compact form and proximity to nature. The challenge is really about finding the right balance. It’s not just about the quantity of housing, but also the quality to improve the urban and natural environment, as well as the way and quality of life for Wellingtonians,” the Mayor says.

While the report highlights a likely shortfall in housing, it shows this to be most acute between the years 2027 to 2047, and particularly in the area of medium-density housing and apartments. It shows that only 4700 terraces and 4300 apartments are likely to be built, when demand at this time will be closer to 7200 terraces and 8100 apartments.

“This makes the conversation about quality, affordable housing even more important. We are already starting to see excellent examples of really creative, multi-unit constructions happening around our city. If we are to meet demand, this is a key model to help get us there,” the Mayor says.

Wellington City Council’s Planning for Growth project is a precursor to a full District Plan review that takes place over the next two years. This review will address a number of planning rules, and look at zones for high and medium density as well as reviewing 1930s character and environmental protections. A ‘Spatial Plan’ describing the principles behind these changes, and future direction for the city will be released for review as part of a public engagement exercise in February 2020.

As well as the residential assessment, the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (HBA) report shows that Wellington City will likely have enough space to accommodate growth in businesses. While population growth in the city, and the region, will mean more demand for business space, in particular for commercial and government floor-space, the report shows there is enough capacity, particularly in the central city as buildings are repurposed, refurbished or redeveloped.

However to ensure the liveliness of central Wellington, as well as our town centres and local shops, areas must be protected for retail and other uses.

“The HBA report shows there is strong demand for Wellington’s space and it is crucial we make good decisions now to ensure Wellington continues to be one of the most liveable cities in the world,” Mayor Foster says.

See the report at [planningforgrowth.wellington.govt.nz](http://planningforgrowth.wellington.govt.nz)