

Our City Tomorrow Spatial Plan for Wellington City

Updated City-wide Estimated Growth Distribution Figures

September 2021

Executive Summary

Our City Tomorrow: A Spatial Plan for Wellington City (the 'Spatial Plan') was adopted by the Council's Pūroro Āmua Planning and Environment Committee ('the Committee') on 24 June 2021.

The Spatial Plan sets the vision for how the city will accommodate 50,000-80,000 more people over the next 30 years. We know that our current District Plan settings do not provide enough houses to meet this growth so the Spatial Plan aims to increase development potential across the City.

On the 24 June the Committee agreed to amend the Spatial Plan to enable further opportunities for housing growth and intensification within the City as follows:

- Increase the extent of walking catchments¹ around all rapid transit stops to 10 minutes (previously a mix of 5 and 10 minutes)
- Increase the extent of the walking catchment from the edge of the Central City to 15 minutes (previously 10 minutes)
- Reduce the extent of character precincts back to the 'sub-areas' proposed in the Draft Spatial Plan.

The changes agreed by the Committee mean that the Spatial Plan provides:

- An **additional 1,331ha of medium density growth areas** than the 42ha of medium density residential areas currently zoned under the operative District Plan
- An **additional 219ha of land within the inner suburbs** available for re-development and intensification than under the operative District Plan.

Cumulatively, the Committee decisions have increased the potential capacity for new housing development from an estimated 23,000-29,700 additional dwellings as presented in the Officer Recommended version of the Spatial Plan, to **24,600-31,100 additional dwellings** under the Adopted Spatial Plan.

Overall, the Spatial Plan is enabling a significant increase in the potential capacity for housing development across the City than is currently provided under the operative District Plan: approximately doubling current capacity in the central city, inner and outer suburbs.

¹ The NPS-UD policy 3(c) requires Council to enable development of at least 6 storeys within walking catchments of the Central City, metropolitan centres, and rapid transit stops (rail stations).

Background

The Spatial Plan is a 30-year strategy for managing the future growth and development of Wellington City. While it is a non-statutory document, it is a first step in responding to the directions of the [National Policy Statement on Urban Development \('NPS-UD'\)](#) and it informs the Council's [District Plan review](#) process.

The District Plan sets the planning rules for the City. In 2019, as part of our requirements under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity 2016 (NPS-UDC) we performed growth modelling for the City to calculate how much of that growth is provided under our current operative District Plan. This growth modelling informed the Wellington Regional Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment Report (2019) ('the HBA') which takes a 30-year look at Wellington's urban city/district council's (Wellington City, Hutt City, Upper Hutt, Porirua, and Kapiti Coast) capacity for housing and business development. The Wellington City chapter of the HBA report is available [here](#).

This work confirmed that what we call "plan-enabled" growth (i.e., development provided for or enabled under the District Plan settings) is much higher than realised development. This is because the District Plan is only one factor in delivering new residential and commercial development. There are many other factors that come into play beyond the District Plan including for example:

- Construction costs
- Land costs and availability of land
- Willingness and ability of property owners to redevelop or sell their sites for redevelopment.

Alongside the District Plan, these factors play a large role in determining where and when new development goes ahead.

What are estimated growth distribution figures?

The estimated growth distribution figures provide a **high-level indication** of the amount of new housing development that could potentially be realised from the Spatial Plan's provisions and how many people this new development could accommodate.

The estimates have been prepared using the Spatial Plan's proposals for housing intensification (i.e., the housing density typologies) as a base and applying an 'uptake' factor (see further explanation below on how the estimates were calculated). The uptake factor used to calculate the estimates is derived from the 2019 HBA report.

While the estimates provide a high-level consideration of potential development capacity (i.e., what development could potentially be achievable), they are pre-feasibility. This means that further investigations of the practicality and viability of development, including from an economic perspective, are required. This work requires a range of further detailed information inputs and will form part of future HBA modelling undertaken.

The estimates include uptake and infill calculations for the Spatial Plan's housing typologies of Type 2 (2 to 3 storeys), Type 3 (3 to 4 storeys), Type 4a (up to 6 storeys), and Type 4b (enable at least 6 storeys). They do not include calculations for Type 1 (1-2 storey detached and semi-detached infill housing) or Type 5 (Up to 8 storeys, found in metropolitan centres, i.e., Johnsonville and Kilbirnie).

These estimated growth distribution figures reflect the final Spatial Plan as adopted by the Council's Pūroro Āmua Planning and Environment Committee ('the Committee') on the 24 June 2021. They provide an update to the 25 September 2020 figures that were released to support the Draft Spatial Plan's consultation process.

Are these figures the same as population growth projections?

The estimated growth distribution figures produced for the Spatial Plan are **not** population growth projections.

A key planning assumption underpinning the Spatial Plan is the projected growth of 50,000 to 80,000 more people living in Wellington City over the next 30 years. This growth will require approximately 25,000-32,000 more houses.

The growth distribution estimates describe how expected future growth can be accommodated and distributed across the City under the Spatial Plan's provisions.

Will these figures change over time?

Yes, the estimated growth distribution figures will be subject to change over time.

The figures represent a point in time and we will have to continue to review and monitor these figures as we move through the next stages of the District Plan review. In fact, we are required by the NPS-UD to regularly monitor and review our figures. Regular review is also necessary because we live and work in a continuously changing and evolving environment, and we want to have an up-to-date view of what change means for development across our City, especially given the increasing unaffordability of housing.

As discussed above, further investigations on the practicality and viability of development to a more granular level are still required and we will do this as we work through the rules that will apply to all new development as part of the District Plan review process. This will include capacity modelling for the Central City, as well as modelling to account for the impact of the removal of the minimum parking requirements across the City on expected growth.

How were the estimated growth distribution figures calculated?

The method for calculating the growth distribution numbers is outlined in the Assessment and Evaluation of Wellington's Outer Suburbs report (2020) available [here](#).

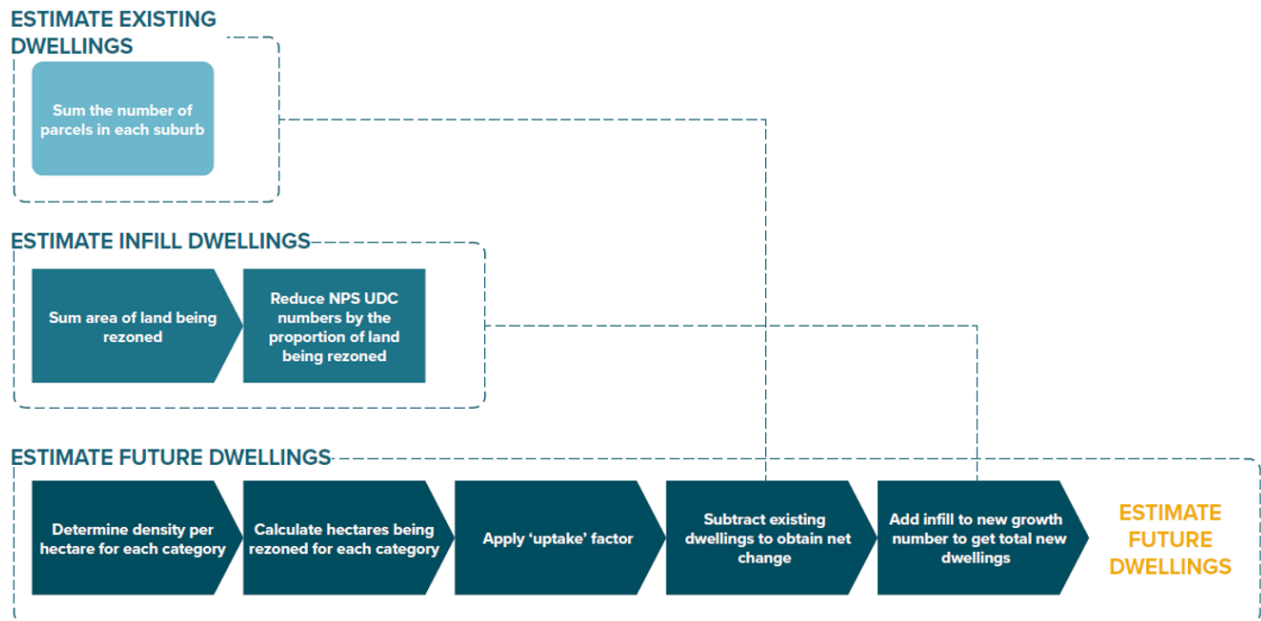


Figure 1: Summary of the Beca methodology for calculating the city-wide population growth estimate figures (Source: Wellington Outer Suburbs Assessment and Evaluation Report, 2020, Beca & Studio Pacific).

Key steps

1. The number of existing dwellings in areas currently zoned as residential was estimated using the Council's rating database.
2. The area of the proposed housing density typology was calculated in hectares and assigned a density assumption of dwellings per hectare to give a total dwelling number.
3. The number of existing dwellings was subtracted total dwelling number to calculate the theoretical infill capacity.
4. An 'uptake' factor was applied to the theoretical infill capacity number. This uptake factor was developed as part of the [Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment \(HBA\) \(2019\)](#) to estimate the realisable capacity for each area. This uptake factor was applied to each housing density typology (table 1 below). It reflects the reality that not every property can or will be developed to maximum capacity.

Table 1: Estimated density per hectare and estimated uptake rate per housing density typology.

Housing density typology	Density per ha	Uptake
Type 2 (2 to 3 storeys)	55	29%
Type 3 (3 to 4 storeys)	100	14%
Types 4a (up to 6 storeys) & 4b (enable at least 6 storeys)	100	14%
Type 5 (up to 8 storeys)	300	8%

5. The 2019 HBA also estimated the population densities of different housing typologies. This estimate was used to calculate the potential population increase enabled by the proposed housing typologies.

More information about this analysis can be found in the Wellington Outer Suburbs Assessment and Evaluation report on the [Planning for Growth website](#).

How much growth capacity is enabled by the current District Plan?

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (NPS-UDC) was introduced in 2016. One of its aims was to ensure that Councils were providing sufficient development capacity to meet growth requirements over the short-, medium-, and long-term. Wellington City Council carried out the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (HBA) in 2019 to evaluate the development capacity enabled by the current District Plan.

The 2019 HBA shows us that under our current District Plan settings, we won't have enough houses to provide for population growth over the next 30 years. This is being compounded by a housing market in which high house prices and rental costs prevail and the choice of affordable options to meet future needs and preferences is constrained.

Under current planning rules there is capacity for approximately 20,300 dwellings in the 2017 to 2047 period. This represents a shortfall of between 3,200 and 9,200 dwellings that are required to meet projected population growth. A breakdown of the spatial distribution of the demand and capacity estimates has been provided per HBA residential catchment in the table below.

Table 2: Housing and Business Capacity Assessment estimated dwelling demand and current capacity (2019).

HBA 2019 Residential Catchments	Estimated dwelling demand	Current District Plan capacity
Central Wellington/CBD	7,500 to 8,000	2,900
Inner Wellington	3,900 to 5,000	2,500
Outer Wellington	12,100 to 17,400	15,000
City-wide total	23,500 to 30,500	20,300

The Spatial Plan's provisions for growth and intensification significantly increase the potential capacity for housing across the City to meet projected population growth. The intensification proposed in the Spatial Plan may enable an additional 24,600 to 31,100 dwellings across Wellington City. This has been broken down by HBA residential catchment area and Spatial Plan suburb area in the table below. Please note that the central city/CBD, inner and outer suburb area boundaries used by the HBA and the Spatial Plan have some differences, so the figures provide an indicative rather than exact comparison.

Table 3: HBA residential dwelling demand and capacity, and additional capacity provided by the Spatial Plan.

HBA 2019 Residential Catchments	Adopted Spatial Plan suburb areas	HBA 2019 (2017-47 estimates)		Adopted Spatial Plan dwelling estimates
		Estimated dwelling demand	Current District Plan capacity	Additional capacity
Central Wellington / CBD	City Centre	7,500 to 8,000	2,900	+8,000
Inner Wellington	Inner Suburbs	3,900 to 5,000	2,500	+1,500 to +2,500
Outer Wellington	Outer Suburbs (incl. greenfield sites)	12,100 to 17,400	15,000	+15,000 to +20,400
City-wide total		23,500 to 30,500	20,300	+24,600 to +31,100

How are we creating additional growth capacity in the Spatial Plan?

Targeted Character Precincts

In the [current operative District Plan](#), **307ha** of land within the inner suburbs is classified as a ‘pre-1930s character area’. These areas have demolition controls (District Plan rules) that make it difficult to develop or intensify the land. Following the Committee’s decision on 24 June 2021, the Adopted Spatial Plan has removed the pre-1930s character overlay and instead replaces it with smaller ‘Character Precincts’ which make up a total of **88ha** of land within the inner suburbs.

This decision has resulted in an additional **219ha** of land within the inner suburbs being made available for re-development and intensification than is currently provided for under the operative District Plan. In other words, some areas that are currently considered pre-1930s character areas, and that fall into the 15-minute Central City walkable catchment, will be enabled for ‘at least 6 storey’ development (consistent with the NPS-UD).

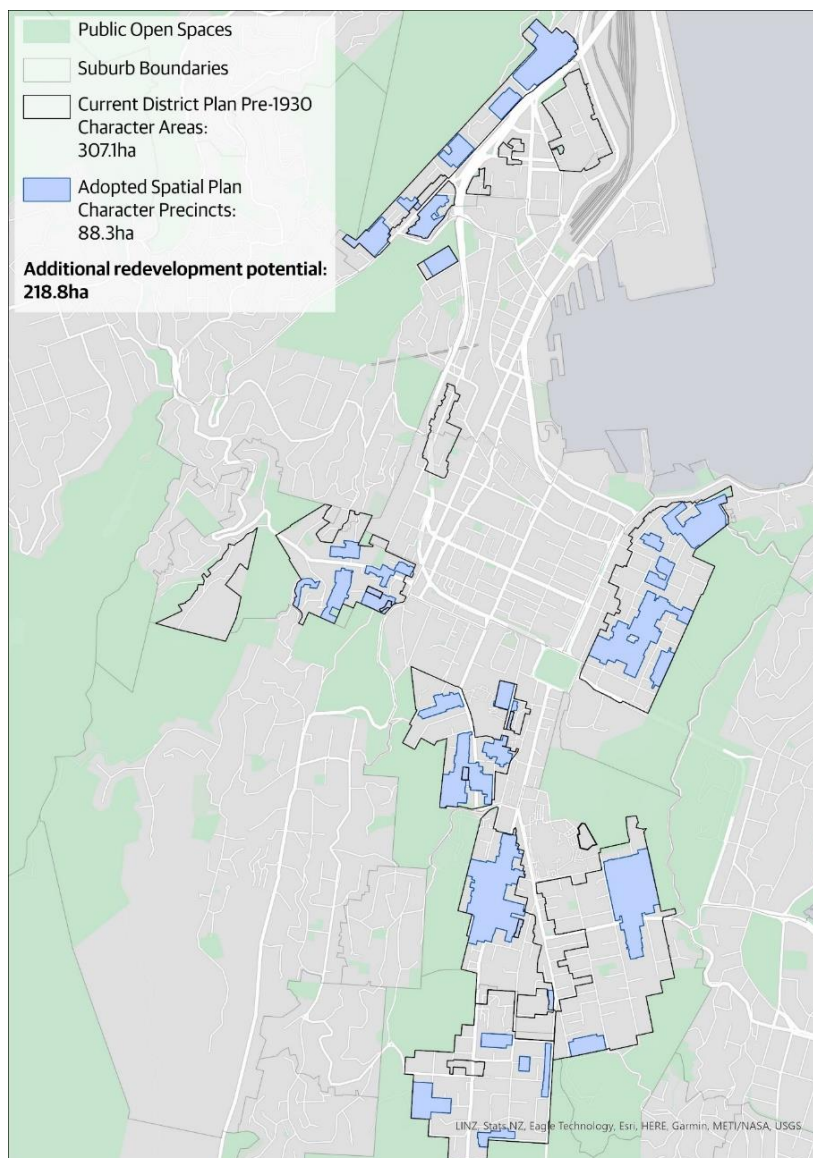


Figure 2: Comparison of current District Plan pre-1930 character areas and Adopted Spatial Plan character precincts.

Increasing Medium Density Residential Areas

Only **42ha** of land is zoned as Medium Density Residential Area (MDRA) in the [current operative District Plan](#). The existing MDRA areas are in Johnsonville and Kilbirnie.

The Adopted Spatial Plan identifies medium growth areas across the City using housing density typologies as follows:

- Type 2 (2 to 3 storeys)
- Type 3 (3 to 4 storeys)
- Type 4a (up to 6 storeys)
- Type 4b (enable at least 6 storeys)

The medium growth areas (see Figure 3 below) will be incorporated into the Draft District Plan as new medium density areas. There is approximately **1,373ha** of medium density areas identified in the Adopted Spatial Plan – an increase of **1,331ha** from the current operative District Plan.

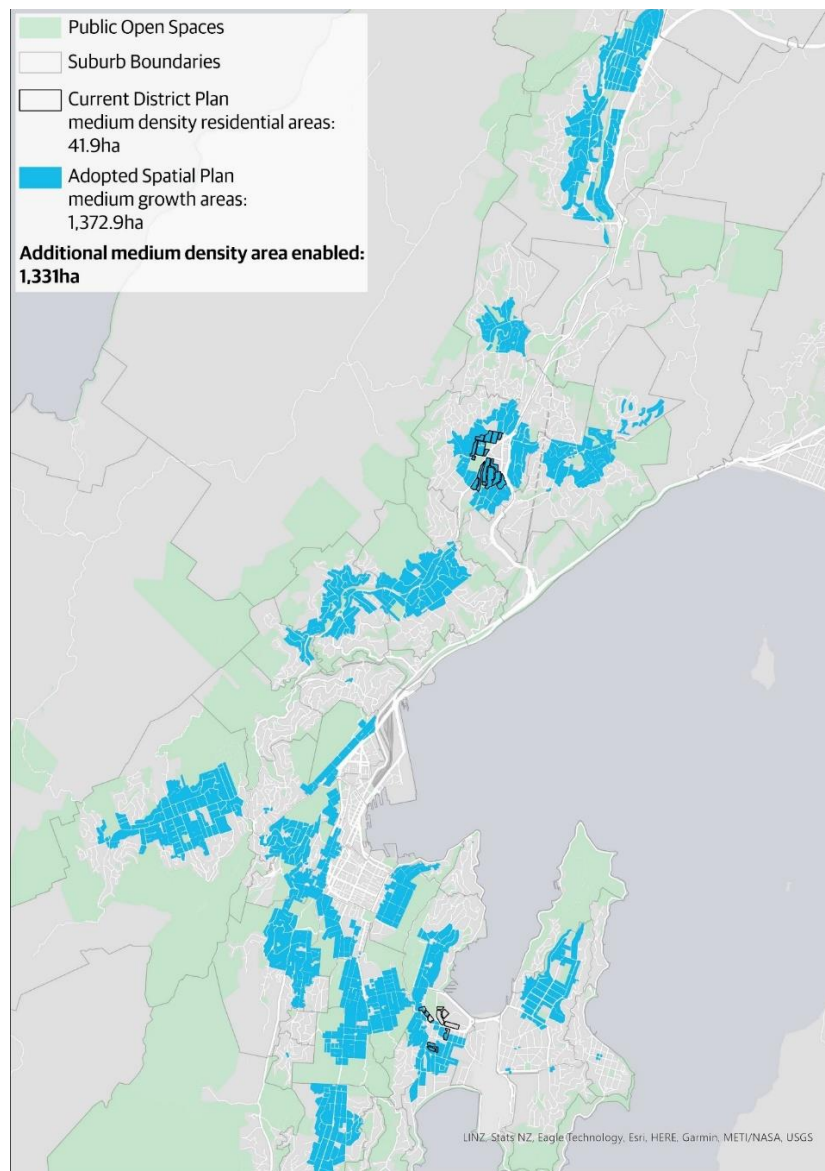


Figure 3: Comparison of current District Plan medium density residential areas and Adopted Spatial Plan medium growth areas.

How much potential capacity for growth is being created by the Spatial Plan?

The following tables show the estimated growth distribution figures for Wellington City.

The figures show the growth and intensification enabled by the [Adopted Spatial Plan](#) (which incorporates the changes made by the Committee on 24 June 2021).

The tables show an approximate range of the number of potential dwellings and people the Spatial Plan is enabling. The range between the numbers considers the variation in development potential and density on each site which would result from different District Plan rules and standards. The figures have been calculated in the context of a range of possible development/density outcomes providing low end of the range and high end of the range figures.

The tables provide estimated growth distribution figures for:

- Wellington City as a whole (Tables 4 and 5)
- The Inner suburbs (Table 6)
- The Outer suburbs (Table 7)

The tables also include a comparison of the difference in estimated capacity between the Officer Recommended version of the Spatial Plan and the Adopted Spatial Plan.

Table 4: Adopted Spatial Plan city-wide estimated growth distribution figures

Area	Adopted Spatial Plan - Theoretical capacity (ie. if 100% of the plan enabled growth happened)		Adopted Spatial Plan - Realisable capacity (when uptake factor is applied)		
	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People	
City Centre ¹	8,182	18,000	8,182	18,000	
Inner Suburbs	9,573 to 14,975	24,152 to 37,467	1,505 to 2,524	3,779 to 6,306	
Outer suburb growth areas	60,056 to 81,893	159,077 to 215,716	11,783 to 16,180	31,090 to 42,631	
Remaining outer suburbs (infill)	2,018 to 2,341	5,156 to 6,043	1,478 to 1,562	3,668 to 3,900	
Greenfield	Upper Stebbings & Glenside West ²	650	1,370 to 1,700	650	1,370 to 1,700
	Lincolnshire Farm	1,000 to 2,000	2,800 to 5,200	1,000 to 2,000	2,800 to 5,200
City-wide total	81,479 to 109,681	210,555 to 284,126	24,598 to 31,098	60,708 to 77,737	

¹ These figures are a conservative estimate for the City Centre and represent a doubling of the existing Central Area population. Detailed modelling of this has not yet been undertaken but will form part of future HBA modelling.

² Previous calculations for Upper Stebbings did not include estimates for Glenside West. Estimates for Glenside West have been included in the Adopted Spatial Plan. The Greenfield estimates reflect the Council's most up-to-date growth figures for Upper Stebbings & Glenside West and an estimate for Lincolnshire Farm.

The figures in table 4 include the additional potential capacity for growth enabled within the inner and outer suburbs based on the Committee decisions on 24 June 2021. These decisions include:

- A 10-minute walkable catchment around all railway stations to enable further intensification in the outer suburbs
- A 15-minute walkable catchment area from the edge of the City Centre to enable further intensification in the inner suburbs
- The removal of a general character overlay and the retention of targeted character precincts.

Table 5: Comparison of Adopted Spatial Plan and Officer Recommended Spatial Plan City-wide estimated growth distribution figures

Area	Officer Recommended Spatial Plan		Adopted Spatial Plan (with Councillor decisions applied)		Estimated dwelling and population increase/decrease		
	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People	
City Centre ¹	8,200	18,000	8,200	18,000	No change	No change	
Inner Suburbs	1,200 to 2,300	3,000 to 5,800	1,500 to 2,500	3,800 to 6,300	+200 to +300	+543 to +790	
Outer suburb growth areas	10,600 to 15,100	28,000 to 39,800	11,800 to 16,200	31,000 to 42,600	+1,100 to +1,200	+2,837 to +3,076	
Remaining outer suburbs (infill)	1,500 to 1,600	3,700 to 3,900	1,500 to 1,600	3,700 to 3,900	No change	No change	
Greenfield	Upper Stebbings & Glenside West ²	500	1,400	650	1,400 to 1,700	+150	+0 to +300
	Lincolnshire Farm	1,000 to 2,000	2,800 to 5,600	1,000 to 2,000	2,800 to 5,200	No change	-400 to 0
City-wide total	23,000 to 29,700	56,800 to 74,400	24,600 to 31,100	60,700 to 77,700	+1,400 to +1,600	+3,300 to +3,900	

1 These figures are a conservative estimate for the City Centre and represent a doubling of the existing Central Area population. Detailed modelling of this has not yet been undertaken but will form part of future HBA modelling.
2 Previous calculations for Upper Stebbings did not include estimates for Glenside West. Estimates for Glenside West have been included in the Adopted Spatial Plan. The Greenfield estimates reflect the Council's most up-to-date growth figures for Upper Stebbings & Glenside West and an estimate for Lincolnshire Farm.

The following tables provide a detailed breakdown of the estimated growth distribution figures for the Inner and Outer suburbs.

Table 6: Comparison of Adopted Spatial Plan and Officer Recommended Spatial Plan estimated growth distribution figures for the inner suburbs

Suburb	Officer Recommended Spatial Plan		Adopted Spatial Plan (with Councillor decisions applied)		Estimated dwelling and population increase/decrease	
	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People	Estimated Dwellings	Estimated People
Aro Valley*	95 to 215	240 to 540	180 to 270	445 to 675	+50 to +80	+130 to +210
Berhampore	120 to 275	285 to 650	175 to 300	410 to 705	+25 to +55	+55 to +120
Kelburn	305 to 550	760 to 1,380	370 to 605	920 to 1,510	+55 to +65	+30 to +160
Mount Cook*	110 to 200	270 to 505	120 to 220	300 to 545	+10 to +20	+25 to +40
Mount Victoria*	120 to 200	290 to 475	150 to 250	360 to 600	+30 to +50	+75 to +120
Newtown	340 to 650	900 to 1,725	460 to 750	1,215 to 1,945	+80 to +120	+220 to +315
Oriental Bay**	20	45 to 50	25 to 30	55 to 70	+5 to +10	+10 to +20
Thorndon*	95 to 290	200 to 440	40 to 130	80 to 265	-85 to -60	-125 to -175
Inner suburbs total	1,200 to 2,300	3,000 to 5,800	1,500 to 2,500	3,800 to 6300	+200 to +300	+500 to +800

* Does not include Central City Area dwellings
** Does not include Central City Area dwellings or Oriental Bay Height Area

Table 7: Comparison of Adopted Spatial Plan and Officer Recommended Spatial Plan estimated growth distribution figures for the outer suburbs

Suburb	Officer Recommended Spatial Plan		Adopted Spatial Plan		Estimated dwelling and population increase/decrease	
	Dwellings	People	Dwellings	People	Dwellings	People
Brooklyn	605 to 960	1,495 to 2,360	605 to 960	1,495 to 2,360	No change	No change
Churton Park	375 to 605	1,020 to 1,655	375 to 605	1,020 to 1,655	No change	No change
Crofton Downs	130 to 175	335 to 450	265 to 320	690 to 825	+135 to +145	+356 to +374
Hataitai	345 to 520	865 to 1,300	345 to 520	865 to 1,300	No change	No change
Island Bay	565 to 945	1,440 to 2,410	565 to 945	1,440 to 2,410	No change	No change
Johnsonville	1,590 to 1,990	4,260 to 5,335	1,585 to 1,980	4,245 to 5,300	-10 to -5	-32 to -15
Karori	2,125 to 2,890	5,585 to 7,600	2,125 to 2,890	5,585 to 7,600	No change	No change
Khandallah	1,250 to 1,625	3,140 to 4,080	1,520 to 1,825	3,817 to 4,585	200 to 270	505 to 680
Kilbirnie	295 to 475	695 to 1,125	295 to 475	695 to 1,125	No change	No change
Lyal Bay	115 to 235	280 to 580	115 to 235	280 to 580	No change	No change
Miramar	395 to 735	1,025 to 1,910	395 to 735	1,025 to 1,910	No change	No change
Newlands	530 to 830	1,450 to 2,270	520 to 820	1,430 to 2,255	-10	-20 to -15
Ngaio	455 to 550	1,185 to 1,420	895 to 1,065	2,330 to 2,770	+440 to +520	+1,145 to +1,350
Tawa	1,855 to 2,580	5,245 to 7,310	2,180 to 2,815	6,170 to 7,965	+235 to +330	+660 to +930
Outer suburbs total	10,600 to 15,100	28,000 to 39,800	11,800 to 16,200	31,000 to 42,600	+1,100 to +1,200	+2,800 to +3,000

Additional Resources

- [Adopted Spatial Plan](#)
- [Current District Plan \(ePlan\)](#)
- [Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment \(2019\) – Wellington City chapter](#)
- [National Policy Statement on Urban Development \('NPS-UD'\)](#)
- [Planning for Growth website](#)
- [The Council's District Plan review process](#)
- [Wellington Outer Suburbs Assessment & Evaluation Report \(2020\)](#)