

16 May 2019

Wellington City Council
101 Wakefield Street
Wellington 6011

Re: Planning for Growth

Tēna koe

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Wellington City Council's 'Planning for Growth'. Regional Public Health (RPH) serves the greater Wellington region, through its three district health boards (DHBs): Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa. We work with our community to make it a healthier safer place to live. We promote good health, prevent disease, and improve the quality of life for our population, with a particular focus on children, Māori and improving equity. Our staff includes a range of occupations such as: medical officers of health, public health advisors, health protection officers, public health nurses, and public health analysts.

RPH would like to **commend** Wellington City Council (WCC) on their public consultation and the considerable thought given to the competing challenges facing Wellington in the future with a growing population. Significant work and thought has gone into the scenarios with regards to climate change, vulnerability to hazards, public and active transport and the special character of certain suburbs. RPH commends WCC on seeking to engage with young people and get input from different voices.

RPH **recommends** that WCC ensures continued meaningful consultation with communities who may not naturally connect online or through social media. This is particularly important for those who traditionally have less power and representation in the planning process; this includes Māori, Pacific peoples, migrant and refugee communities, older people and those on low-income. Alternative approaches may be needed, including the use of focus group discussions or working alongside others who have existing connections with these communities.

The recent amendments to the Local Government Act to reinstate the four aspects of community wellbeing – economic, social, environmental and cultural – has highlighted the importance of putting the wellbeing of citizens at the centre of all that WCC does. Through the spatial plan, WCC has the opportunity to promote and improve the wellbeing and health of its citizens. Decisions around land use, housing, transport and the natural environment will all have a powerful impact on the health and wellbeing of Wellingtonians. By using a public health lens throughout the spatial planning process, for example to identify who is likely to benefit from changes that are made and who might miss out, WCC can build and grow on the existing strong focus on wellbeing.

Should WCC be interested, RPH could facilitate a workshop for the planners involved in spatial planning to discuss how to achieve greater synergy between public health and council processes.

Such discussions have the potential to strengthen what the spatial plan can achieve in terms of improved health and wellbeing for the Wellington community.

There are a range of practical tools that can be used during the planning process to ensure wellbeing is a core part of the final outcomes. These tools are all flexible, and can be used in their entirety or used as the basis for discussion and appraisal of spatial planning work. Tools and approaches include:

- **Health Equity Assessment Tool:** a tool that aims to improve equity in health in New Zealand. It consists of a set of ten questions that assess the current and future impact of policies on health equity.
- **Health Impact Assessment or Whānau Ora Health Impact Assessment:** systematic way of assessing the positive and negative health impacts of a policy, with particular attention to inequities.
- **Health Promotion and Sustainability through Environmental Design:** a planning guide developed by Christchurch City Council and Community and Public Health (Christchurch's Public Health Unit). Divided into 14 themes that identify the links between environmental design and community health and wellbeing.
- **Integrated Planning Guide:** also developed in Christchurch, originally focused on earthquake recovery, but updated in 2018 to focus on city planning more broadly. Presents targeted questions to encourage critical thinking and innovation. Presents a way of ensuring sustainability, resilience and health are integrated into planning, alongside social, environmental and economic outcomes.
- **Identify opportunities to have dedicated public health expertise as part of the council workforce:** given the significant impact of spatial planning on wellbeing and health, WCC could consider funding dedicated public health expertise to work alongside planners for the duration of the project.

For further information on these tools please do not hesitate to contact us. We welcome the opportunity to remain involved as Planning for Growth continues, and to meet with planners to discuss how we can best support them in this work.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

The point of contact for this letter of support is:

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Naku noa, na

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