

10 May 2021

Wellington Regional Growth Framework
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Re: Draft Wellington Regional Growth Framework

Tēnā koe

Regional Public Health would like to **formally register our support** for the Draft Wellington Regional Growth Framework.

Regional Public Health (RPH) delivers population and personal health services in the greater Wellington region. Our geographical area of service delivery spans Hutt Valley, Capital & Coast, and Wairarapa DHBs. We aim to improve the health of communities. In particular, we focus on achieving equitable health outcomes for high needs groups such as Māori, Pacific peoples, children and youth, low income families and other vulnerable groups.

Evidence suggests that effective spatial planning can contribute to building healthier and more equitable communities and neighbourhoods. It is therefore an important tool to help address the various public health challenges we face as a region, including climate change effects, response to and recovery from pandemics, and the continuing impact of long term health conditions on population wellbeing.

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted to all of us the importance of building local neighbourhood resilience to the challenges that our communities face. It has emphasised how features of our neighbourhoods such as access to safe and healthy housing, community facilities, public transport options, active connections, water quality, parks and open space as well as local food sources can help or hinder individual and collective resiliency. COVID-19 has also highlighted the impact of unequal distribution of these features across our communities. For instance, the pandemic increased the challenge of providing vulnerable people with access to food, health and other resources, as well as safe, secure and healthy accommodation to allow people to isolate safely and effectively.

The Framework's integrated approach to planning provides an important opportunity to more effectively, equitably and sustainably plan for the current and future wellbeing of all communities across the greater Wellington region (including Horowhenua).

However, spatial plans are only as effective as the quality of their ongoing implementation. Continuing to strengthen integration across the various workstreams of the Framework will be a significant challenge, as will ensuring the quality and location of urban intensification matches the intent laid out in the Framework. For instance, ensuring easily walkable connections to public

transport and ensuring sufficient supportive social infrastructure is incorporated into areas of denser development.

RPH **appreciates** the invitation to provide public health input on the approach and scope for local structure plans, regional housing, climate change effects, three waters and food production strategies in particular.

We **recommend** that the [Wellington Regional Healthy Housing Group](http://www.wrhhg.org.nz) (WRHHG) is invited to participate in the regional housing workstream. Their vision is “Everyone in the Wellington region lives in warm, dry and safe housing by 2025”. A key value of the group, from RPH’s perspective, is the strengthened connections between Council members and wider stakeholders such as ourselves on regional housing issues. The Group provides a forum for the sharing of ideas, information and resources and provides meaningful opportunities to work in partnership toward the vision. RPH would be happy to discuss this further, or you can contact Amanda Scothern, WRHHG Executive Officer on: info@wrhhg.org.nz.

RPH also **recommends** that the development of the Regional Food Production Strategy, prioritised for year 3, is brought forward. If this work doesn’t occur in tandem with structure planning and climate change response activities, the opportunity to protect and preserve highly productive land and the ability of communities and individuals to continue to grow their own food could be reduced. There is strong alignment between the development of a Regional Food Production Strategy and work RPH is leading with others to develop a regional food network addressing food security. There is an opportunity for this work to activate progress toward a Regional Food Production Strategy and broaden the remit to include food resilience, employment, food sovereignty and sustainability. A local food production and distribution system based on ecological sustainability, able to withstand natural and human-made shocks is a vital part of food resilience.¹ We **welcome** the opportunity to align the Network development with the Regional Food Strategy project and look forward to continuing to explore this with you.

RPH also **registers our support** for the submission from the Kai and Community Regional Food Network (yet to be formally named), and the Wellington Regional Healthy Housing submission on the draft Framework.

The contact point for this submission is:

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Kind regards

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¹ World Health Organisation, 1996, World Food Summit definition of food security.