

DRAFT CENTRES POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Policy

This Policy provides a framework to guide the development and management of the City's centres. Centres are the focus of economic and social life in our communities. They have multiple functions and activities, but their core is typically retail and local services. Wellington City has an established network of centres, from the central city which has a citywide and regional role, to the larger town centres serving several suburbs (such as Johnsonville and Kilbirnie) through to smaller centres serving their local areas and neighbourhoods.

The Centres Policy provides clear policy guidance on how centres should be managed and developed in the future. It will be supported and implemented through more detailed policies (including the District Plan and centre plans), Council's infrastructure investment decisions and specific projects and initiatives.

1.2 Overall Approach

Centres are the key places that support Council's Urban Development Strategy and the 'Growth Spine' in which future development will be concentrated. The Growth Spine is built around key centres connected by a high quality transport corridor. The Centres Policy is intended to consider in an integrated way the varied roles of the centres, to provide guidance on how they should be managed and developed in the future, and to assist in coordinating Council's activities and programmes in and around centres.

The overall intent of the Policy is to maintain and strengthen our existing and planned centres. For the larger centres this will mean retaining their role as the primary places to shop and growing their multi-functional nature by facilitating residential development, employment growth and increasing the range of facilities and services available. For the smaller centres this will mean retaining and strengthening their role in providing accessible convenience shopping and local community services. For all centres it is also important to improve the quality of urban design outcomes and to maximise their potential to achieve more sustainable forms of development.

A hierarchy of centres has been reintroduced to provide guidance as to their appropriate role and function, and will assist in assessing the appropriateness of proposed developments. This is supported by defining 'Planning Areas' based around each of the larger centres to provide a common spatial planning framework to assist Council's investment programmes in areas such as infrastructure and community facilities and to ensure integrated planning.

1.3 Wellington's Centres

Wellington has a well established network of centres across the City, each of which has different roles and functions built up over time, reflecting their location, population catchment, size and historical development pattern.

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In Wellington the central city has always played a dominant role as the primary centre of both Wellington City and indeed the region as a whole. It continues to be the primary shopping centre (especially for comparison and speciality goods), as well as the major employment centre for the region, a centre for civic functions and an entertainment and events hub.

The inner and outer suburbs are also well served by a network of centres, with a relatively even distribution of the six larger town centres through the urban area supported by almost 20 district and neighbourhood centres. The only identified gaps are in the more recently developed northern suburbs, where some suburbs are growing without appropriate access to local convenience shopping or a community focal point. The planned centres for Churton Park and Lincolnshire Farm will help complete the network.

In recent years a number of other retail destinations have been developed, often based on large-format retail activities (ie Rongotai retail park). These have a single-activity focus and do not have the same functions and roles as centres. There are also a number of areas across the City which are primarily used for industrial activities – again these have a single-activity focus and are not considered to be centres.

1.4 The Role of Centres

Centres are the focus for much of the economic and social life of their communities. They provide accessible shopping and local services to meet people's day-to-day needs. The larger the centre - the greater the range of activities and functions that are typically located there. It is the combination of activities and functions that makes centres particularly important places, as it enables them to deliver a range of environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits.

The role of larger centres should include:

- A nexus for community contact and exchange - social activity occurs as a consequence of people moving about in the same space, and centres are the most important places for such meetings, particularly as they are more than often the location for community and entertainment facilities. Centres also have a role in defining our identity and our local community.
- Shopping - household spending on retail is second only to spending on housing – this means that retail is a critical factor in the economic viability of centres. Retail (particularly supermarkets and large department stores) makes viable the co-location of specialist retailing and a range of services that are visited less often.
- Public transport nodes - all of the City's high frequency public transport routes pass through or close to centres. People living in and around centres are able to walk to access these services. Even when the primary transport mode is a private vehicle, centres provide significant environmental benefits, by enabling people to combine one vehicle trip with multiple purposes (ie. to shop, access services, visit community facilities, meet other people and go to work). Reducing vehicle emissions is a key element in reducing the City's carbon footprint.
- Employment nodes - the central city and larger town centres have significant concentrations of employment. Many of the businesses in these centres are within the service sector- one of the growth areas of the economy.
- A focus for intensive residential development - centres and their surrounds are also proposed to be the focus for more intensive housing growth over the next 50 years,

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with the review of infill housing anticipating that 60% (22,000 people) of future growth will occur in and around centres.

2.0 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Objective 1

To identify the appropriate role and function of each centre within Wellington City and provide a spatial framework for integrated planning.

Approach

To identify the role and function of each centre, a centre hierarchy has been reintroduced (see Appendix 1). The hierarchy classifies each centre based on a range of factors including: its comparative size and land area, population catchment, type of retail, range of activities, facilities and services, and levels of accessibility. There are six different types of centres in Wellington City: the central city; six town centres; five district centres; and fifteen neighbourhood centres. The purpose of this hierarchy is to:

- *promote the central city as the primary centre for Wellington City and the rest of the region;*
- *promote Town Centres and District Centres as major centres to service their suburban catchments providing for the weekly shopping, service and community needs;*
- *promote Neighbourhood Centres as performing a vital role in providing the day-to-day convenience shopping for the neighbourhood as well as an important focus for neighbourhood services;*
- *ensure that Retail Destinations, Work Areas and Mixed Use Areas (defined in Appendix 1) do not take on the role and function of centres or undermine their viability or vitality;*
- *ensure that development within existing centres (particularly retail or office) does not undermine the role and function of other centres, due to an inappropriate scale.*

To support the centre hierarchy and to provide an appropriate spatial context for integrated centre planning and development, 11 Planning Areas have been identified. These recognise that centres, through their multiple functions, are inextricably linked to their surrounding areas. They provide a context for centre development and integrated planning and have been based on a combination of factors including: geographical catchments for centres, topography and physical boundaries, communities of interest, social and political boundaries, and transport and infrastructure networks.

Policy 1.1

Retail development within centres should be of a scale and intensity appropriate to the place of that centre in the hierarchy. Redevelopment opportunities are likely to be of greater scale and intensity in the larger centres and of lesser scale and intensity in smaller centres.

Policy 1.2

The identified Planning Areas (and the centres within them) will be used to assist in integrated place-based planning, including the integrated planning of Council activities and programmes.

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Objective 2

To maintain and strengthen the central city as the primary centre within the City and region for: shopping, employment, city-living, culture and entertainment, tourism and major events, and ensure that development in other locations does not compromise this role.

Approach

The importance of the central city to both Wellington City and the region as a whole cannot be underestimated. As an employment centre it provides jobs for over 70,000 people (over 30% of all jobs within the region). As a shopping centre it has the largest concentration of retail in the region and is dominant in comparison goods, fashion and speciality shopping. The Golden Mile is of particular importance to the City, and is viewed by investors as Wellington's 'outdoor mall'. As a living environment it now houses over 12,000 people in a range of apartments providing a 'city-living' option for the region's population. It is an entertainment and events centre and a public transport hub, being the terminus for the region's rail network and the main 'conduit' for most of the bus routes. As a national capital, it houses most of the major Government departments, Parliament and other national institutions. The importance of the central city to the economic and social health of the whole region is recognised in the Wellington Regional Strategy and the Regional Policy Statement.

The approach is therefore to maintain and strengthen the central city, to ensure that it retains its primacy as an employment and retail centre, to further grow its residential population, and to strengthen its other roles and functions. The concentration of office-based employment in the central city, combined with the significant retail offer of the Golden Mile, and the high quality of the public realm is critical to maintaining the international competitiveness of Wellington and achieving sustainable development outcomes.

Plan Change 48 (currently the subject of appeal to the Environment Court), has recently established a robust planning policy to guide the future development of the central city. To support this, a non-statutory framework is proposed to facilitate integrated development and management on a place-based basis, encompassing both Council activities and the activities of other stakeholders.

Policy 2.1

The national capital role of Wellington will be celebrated and strengthened.

Policy 2.2

A Central City Framework will be developed to guide the integrated development and management of the area.

Policy 2.3

Retail proposals elsewhere in the City will only be supported where they are of a scale that does not impact on the long-term viability and vitality of the central city.

Policy 2.4

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The central city is the preferred location for major office developments (>5000m² GFA).

Policy 2.5

Proposals for very large (>10000m² GFA) retail developments elsewhere in the central city will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that they would not have significant adverse impacts on the economic viability and vibrancy of the Golden Mile.

Policy 2.6

A focus will continue to be placed on projects to maintain and improve the quality of the public realm in the central city to make it attractive to businesses, workers, residents and visitors.

Objective 3

To strengthen the multi-functional nature of centres, including their role as social and community foci, public transport hubs, places where people live and work, and centres for entertainment, recreation and local services.

Approach

Council has a significant influence on the nature of centres through the regulation of development, its investment in infrastructure, improvements to the public realm, through the development of community facilities and through its ongoing city management role. It is important that these varied activities and other specific initiatives maximise the benefits to the City through coordination and integration on a place-basis.

A particular proposal under consideration to assist in the future management of our centres is the use of Business Improvement Districts (BIDS). These have been extensively used in other parts of the country (sometimes known as 'Mainstreet' programmes) and overseas and can be an effective way of building local ownership and providing a funding base to address local environmental and social issues and to facilitate economic development opportunities. Marsden Village is the only current example of such a mechanism in Wellington City that is funded through targeted rates, however there are other business-led organisations such as Courtney Quarter or Enterprise Miramar. BIDS are a form of private-public partnership that generate funding through a targeted rate on local property owners and/or businesses. They take the form of an Incorporated Society with a management committee and with members having voting rights.

Policy 3.1

Centre plans will be developed to facilitate the strengthening of centres and to ensure integrated and sustainable development. These will integrate Council's aspirations for centres expressed through Council's policies and planning documents and will be developed as resources allow in the following priority order:

- 'Growth Spine' nodes – central city, Johnsonville, Adelaide Road, and Kilbirnie (2007/08 – 2009/10);
- Centres proposed as 'Areas of Change' for medium-density housing intensification as part of the review of infill housing;

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- Centres where significant private sector investment is proposed that will impact on the overall form and operation of that centre;
- Other centres (as appropriate).

Policy 3.2

Centre plans will be supported by Council through:

- Coordinating planning processes and the delivery of services and functions;
- Examining how infrastructure and other public facilities can be improved where gaps are found or opportunities identified;
- Continuing to focus new or upgraded community facilities in centres;
- Facilitating and encouraging investment in centres by public agencies and private investors;
- Working with businesses to identify opportunities to facilitate investment and improvement;
- Ensuring, in its regulatory capacity, that new development contributes towards the achievement of this Centres Policy;
- Reviewing, as necessary, the District Plan to incorporate and implement centre plans.

Policy 3.3

The feasibility of establishing mechanisms such as Business Improvement Districts will be investigated to provide additional tools to:

- Support the implementation of the centre plan programme;
- Build a partnership between business and Council;
- Improve the ongoing management of centres, and addressing local environmental and social issues;
- Promote investment in each centre;
- Foster local leadership;
- Enhance engagement between Council, businesses and the community.

This will be considered as part of the 2009/10 LTCCP.

Policy 3.4

Council's programme for public space development and improvement will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the priorities reflect and support Council's Urban Development Strategy, and integrate with the following policies and plans:

- Centres Policy;
- Review of infill housing;
- Review of the Suburban Centre chapter of the District Plan;
- Central city framework;
- Walking and cycling plans;
- Community facilities plan;
- Asset management plans and renewals programme.

Objective 4

To manage the location of retail activities to ensure they support Wellington's compact urban form, provide for sustainable transport options and an efficient use of resources, and support the long-term vitality and viability of existing centres.

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Approach

The development of further out-of-centre retail destinations has the potential to adversely affect the viability and vitality of existing centres. Although there has been limited development of this type in the City to date, there is considerable pressure, and opportunities will no doubt continue to emerge as ‘windfall’ sites come onto the market or as the economics of development changes.

Most out-of-centre retail activity comes with few of the co-location or added economic, environmental and social benefits presented by a mixed-use centre. Whilst they may offer a “price to market” advantage to consumers, due to their low land costs and lower operating costs, this is only one of a number of costs and benefits that have to be considered in assessing the appropriateness of such activities. On the cost side they generate increased total transport trips, higher use of private vehicles and consequent environmental impacts. If they are of sufficient scale, and dependant on location, they can also threaten the viability and vitality of existing centres and devalue public spending on infrastructure in existing centres (ie. roads, public transport, public realm, community facilities, and streetscape enhancements). In some cases significant new retail developments may require additional infrastructure to support them at a cost to ratepayers – this can result in duplicated services and increased pressure on already stretched funding.

Retail that falls into the general merchandise, hypermarkets, supermarket or fashion categories, regardless of whether it is in a large-format or not, generates high levels of repeat visitation and can generate much greater economic, social and environmental benefits as a consequence of location in a mixed activity centre and co-location with other complementary or even competitive stores.

On the other hand, yard-based retail, trade-based retail and bulky goods retail generate infrequent visits as the purchase or ticket price is high and the goods for sale are often not consumables but capital items or assets. Stores selling these goods are by necessity of the product large, requiring extensive building footprints, large servicing and car parking areas. As such they are often not suitable or viable to locate in centres, and an out-of-centre location can be justified.

Policy 4.1

Any proposal for larger-scale retail development outside of a centre will not be supported unless it can demonstrate that it will:

- be able to be accessed by a variety of modes including public transport, walking and cycling;
- not generate significant adverse effects from trip patterns, travel demand and car use;
- not have significant adverse impacts on the economic performance and viability of existing centres;
- not require further direct or indirect investment in public infrastructure or facilities that cannot be funded from development contributions;
- not adversely impact either directly or indirectly on existing public infrastructure and facilities in any existing centre.

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Policy 4.2

Proposals for supermarkets (and hypermarkets selling fresh produce) will generally only be supported within or on the edge of existing centres.

Policy 4.3

Council has the following preferences for locating larger-format retail within the City:

Large Format Retail Activity	Locational Preferences	
	Centres	Retail Destinations Work Areas Mixed Use Areas
(a) Yard-based activities (ie. building supplies, garden centres, car sales, agricultural supplies)		✓
(b) Trade suppliers (ie. tiles, paint, electrical supplies, plumbing supplies, catering supplies)	✓	✓
(c) Bulky comparison goods (ie. whiteware and appliances, furniture, office products, carpets, bedding)	✓	✓
(d) General merchandise (ie. supermarkets, hypermarkets, discount stores, department stores, homewares, clothing)	✓	

Objective 5

To support centres through targeting future residential growth in and around centres identified as being suitable for change due to good transport accessibility, suitable physical characteristics and lower sensitivity to changes to character.

Approach

The review of infill housing has identified potential ‘Areas of Change’ where future residential intensification would occur over the next 20-50 years. All of these are based in and around centres, because these areas offer the greatest benefits. Residential development can support the long-term viability and vitality of centres through providing an additional population catchment in areas with walkable access to the centre, by increasing the number of people on the streets and using facilities and services, through improving night-time safety, and through maximising the utilisation of existing public transport networks.

Policy 5.1

Residential development in all centres will be supported where it:

- Contributes to maintaining and enhancing the viability and vitality of the centre;
- Utilises upper floors of buildings;
- Maintains active ground floor activities;
- Provides a secure and high amenity environment for the occupiers.

Policy 5.2

Residential development within larger centres identified as being ‘Areas of Change’ should achieve a higher density and should be based on apartment typologies.

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Policy 5.3

Residential development in areas around centres and identified as being 'Areas of Change' should achieve a medium-density and be based on townhouse and unit typologies.

Objective 6

To ensure that there is a sufficient supply of land available for industrial activities to meet the long-term needs of the City.

Approach

In the early 1990's the Council adopted a new approach to managing all of the centres outside of the central city. This created a single zone (Suburban Centre) that applies to all of the City's centres (excluding the central city) as well as industrial areas and other mixed use places. The rules for this zone placed no restriction on activities, subject to compliance with basic environmental standards such as noise, glare, servicing and parking. In some centres this zoning has facilitated a significant shift in the mix of activities present. One of the most notable trends has been the move of residential and retail activities into areas previously dominated by commercial and industrial. This has the potential to restrict the future availability of land for industrial activities which are critical to the overall economy of the City.

Policy 6.1

Retail Destinations, Work Areas and Mixed Use Areas are not to take on the role and functions of centres although a limited range of ancillary services which meet local needs and maximise accessibility may be appropriate.

Policy 6.2

The development of non-industrial uses in Work Destinations will be controlled through the District Plan.

Objective 7

To improve the urban design quality of all centres and build on their sense of place.

Approach

The only urban design assessment currently applicable to development in the Suburban Centre zone is for retail activities over 500m² and for multi-unit residential development (under Plan Change 52). Consultation as part of the Suburban Centre review has revealed strong support (84% of respondents) for improving the quality of urban design in centres. Development in centres has a particular public prominence that deserves special attention and the design of buildings and spaces around them have a strong influence on the public realm where social interaction occurs. As such, it is proposed to widen the triggers for urban design assessment in centres and where possible to apply specific rules to improve outcomes. This broadly follows the approach taken in the central city (Plan Change 48).

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Policy 7.1

The quality of urban design outcomes in centres will be improved through including in the District Plan:

- one or more design guides specifically for centres;
- a design guide for apartment-type development in centres;
- wider triggers for design assessment;
- requirements for ‘active street frontages’ (ie pedestrian access points, verandahs, glazing);
- requirements for the location and design of surface car parking;
- place-based plans (ie centre plans, urban design frameworks) into the District Plan to provide additional guidance to assessment;
- investigating and identifying heritage areas where appropriate.

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APPENDIX 1 - CENTRE HIERARCHY

CENTRE TYPE	EXPECTED CHARACTERISTICS
Central City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - servicing the whole City/region - extensive retail offer (ie >100,000m² floorspace) - several department stores and full range of retail goods and specialist stores - civic centre and centre of government - range of centralised community facilities - major employment node (including large offices) - extensive residential uses (ie high-rise apartments) - extensive recreational and entertainment activities - major cultural institutions - visitor facilities - public transport hub
Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Johnsonville ▪ Karori ▪ Kilbirnie ▪ Miramar ▪ Newtown ▪ Tawa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - servicing one or more suburbs - significant retail offer (ie between 10,000 - 30,000m² floorspace) - anchored by mall or traditional high street, with at least one or more large supermarket and a range of retail activities - range of community facilities - residential uses (ie apartments) - recreational and entertainment activities - some civic or government services - employment node - medium-scale office uses - very good accessibility by public transport
District Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brooklyn ▪ Crofton Downs ▪ Island Bay ▪ Khandallah ▪ Newlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - servicing surrounding suburb - moderate retail offer including convenience based retail (ie <10,000m² floorspace) servicing day-to-day needs and small/medium supermarket - residential uses (ie townhouses/units) - community facilities and services - recreational and entertainment activities - small-scale professional office uses - very good accessibility by public transport
Neighbourhood Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aro St ▪ Berhampore ▪ <i>Churton Park¹</i> ▪ Haitaitai ▪ Kelburn ▪ Kingston ▪ <i>Lincolnshire Farm Neighbourhood Centre¹</i> ▪ Linden ▪ Northland ▪ Marsden Village ▪ Ngaio ▪ Seatoun ▪ Strathmore ▪ Tinakori Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - servicing surrounding residential neighbourhood - small retail offer based on convenience based retail servicing retail (ie <5,000m² floorspace) day-to-day needs - community services - good accessibility by public transport

¹ Proposed centre, not yet constructed

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▪ Wadestown	
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OTHER AREAS (Not Centres)	EXPECTED CHARACTERISTICS
Retail Destinations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rongotai Retail Park ▪ Dressmart Tawa ▪ Cobham Drive ▪ Wellington Airport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - servicing sub-regional/regional catchment - retail-based, focussed on large-format retail (except Wellington Airport) - few or no community, civic or entertainment services - no supermarkets and limited food retailing (except Wellington Airport) - moderate accessibility by public transport
Work Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collins Avenue ▪ Glenside ▪ Grenada North ▪ Kaiwharawhara ▪ Kiwi Point Quarry ▪ Landfill ▪ <i>Lincolnshire Farm</i>² ▪ Miramar North ▪ Ngauranga ▪ Rongotai ▪ Tawa South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high proportion of employment activities - trade-based retail activities - no community or entertainment facilities - limited food retailing - no residential activities - moderate accessibility by public transport at peak times
Mixed Use Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adelaide Road ▪ Shelly Bay³ ▪ Greta Point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mix of employment activities, including light industrial, commercial and business services, new economy activities - residential activities (ie apartments/townhouses) - local community services - accessibility to public transport dependant on mix of uses

² Proposed industrial area not yet constructed

³ Land currently largely vacant awaiting Port Nicholson claim resolution

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APPENDIX 2 – PLANNING AREAS

PLANNING AREA	SUBURBS	CENTRES
1	Tawa Takapu Valley Grenada North	Town Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tawa Neighbourhood Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linden
2	Churton Park Glenside Grenada Village Horokiwi Woodridge Paparangi Newlands Johnsonville Ngauranga Broadmeadows	Town Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Johnsonville District Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Newlands Neighbourhood Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Churton Park</i> ● <i>Lincolnshire Farm neighbourhood centre</i>
3	Makara Makara Beach Ohariu	
4	Khandallah Ngaio Kaiwharawhara Wadestown Northland Wilton Crofton Downs	District Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crofton Downs Neighbourhood Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Khandallah ● Northland ● Ngaio ● Wadestown
5	Karori	Town Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Karori Neighbourhood Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marsden Village
6	Kelburn Aro Valley Highbury Brooklyn Vogeltown Mornington Kingston	District Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brooklyn Neighbourhood Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kelburn ● Aro Street ● Kingston
7	Thorndon Pipitea Wellington Central Te Aro Mount Cook Mount Victoria Oriental Bay Roseneath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Central City Neighbourhood Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tinakori Road

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8	Newtown Berhampore	Town Centre • Newtown Neighbourhood Centre • Berhampore
9	Owhiro Bay Island Bay Southgate Houghton Bay	District Centre • Island Bay
10	Rongotai Lyal Bay Melrose Hataitai Kilbirnie	Town Centre • Kilbirnie Neighbourhood Centre • Hataitai
11	Maupuia Karaka Bays Miramar Seatoun Strathmore Park Breaker Bay Moa Point	Town Centre • Miramar Neighbourhood Centre • Seatoun • Strathmore

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Wellington Planning Basemap
- Planning Areas -

DATA STATEMENT
Topographic data: Wellington City Council
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