

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Our built environment work includes enhancing the waterfront and city and suburban centres, developing public spaces such as urban parks and squares, looking after heritage sites, assessing and issuing building and resource consents, ensuring earthquake-prone buildings are strengthened, and planning for the city's future growth and development.

The significant growth and development expected in Wellington over the next 20 years creates some challenges for us. We're aiming to respond to those challenges in ways that are sustainable and preserve the city's special character.

A key priority through to 2009 is to improve land use and transport by focusing development along a 'growth spine' stretching from Johnsonville in the north, to the central city, and Newtown and Kilbirnie in the south. Other priorities include improving the way we manage infill development in residential areas, and improving the quality of the city's urban design. During the year, progress was made on all of these priorities. Specifically:

- We sought public views on infill housing (i.e. 'backyard' developments in some city areas) with the aim of improving the way it is managed. Our draft policy proposed having some areas of the city where infill will be encouraged and other areas where it will be tightly controlled or not allowed at all.
- We reviewed rules for development of the inner city and proposed some changes including provisions to encourage higher quality building design. We also proposed lower building height restrictions in heritage areas.
- We developed a strategy for growth in Johnsonville, aimed at turning it into the city's second biggest centre after the CBD.
- We adopted District Plan changes to protect heritage buildings in Newtown, Kilbirnie and Berhampore, and took other steps to protect heritage buildings throughout the city.

In addition, we provided funding to *Wellington: It's Our Fault* – a long-term scientific study of the risk and likely impact of a major earthquake on Wellington.

TRANSPORT

We look after 670km of streets and roads, as well as footpaths, cycle lanes, traffic signals, car parks and so on. We also: support public transport through bus priority measures such as bus lanes, letting buses go first at traffic lights, and providing bus shelters; work suburb by suburb to improve road safety; and plan to ensure the city's transport network meets future needs.

Our transport system is generally performing well – Wellington's streets are safe by national standards, we're high users of public transport, and most residents believe the city is easy to get around.

However, we do face challenges such as ensuring the transport network can keep up with growing demand, and reducing harmful environmental effects such as noise and air pollution.

For the period to 2009, key priorities include managing demand on the transport network, advocating for investment in the city's state highway network, further developing our bus priority measures, and improving access to the port and ferry terminals. During the year, councillors considered options for extending the bus lane network throughout key arterial routes. Work started on the port and ferry access – this will continue over the next three years. We agreed on roading priorities for the region, and started work on a walking and cycling plan.

Highlights for 2006/07 included:

- We reduced speed limits on Lambton Quay and Willis St to improve safety. New speed limits were also set on rural roads in Ohariu and Makara.
- Road safety improvements were carried out in Wilton, Wadestown, Northland and Karori.
- The inner city bypass was opened.

our activities at a
glance



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We work to attract major events such as the World of WearableArt Awards and the International Sevens. We also fund tourism promotions, and support attractions such as Te Papa and conference venues such as the Wellington Convention Centre. To support businesses, we: provide free weekend parking in the city, provide grants to help community projects with economic benefits for the city; and market the city as a destination of choice. We also funded Positively Wellington Business to provide business development and incubator programmes, and programmes to attract businesses, investment and skilled people to the region.

Key challenges are to make the city more internationally competitive, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, and lift Wellington's sustainable economic growth.

Priorities for the period to 2009 include: implementing the Wellington Regional Strategy to guide economic development; strengthening the city's status as a centre of creativity and innovation; and attracting at least one regular long-haul air service to Wellington from a south-east Asian market.

In 2006/07, the first key steps were taken to implement the strategy with the establishment of a new regional economic development agency which is part funded by our residents through the Greater Wellington Regional Council. The new agency has taken over the work of Positively Wellington Business.

Positively Wellington Tourism and Wellington International Airport made progress towards attracting a long-haul air service, and steps were taken to encourage innovation by looking into ways to secure a world-class broadband network.

Other highlights for 2006/07 included:

- Several high profile events were held, including the World Golden Oldies Rugby Festival, Elton John's December 2006 concert, the World of WearableArt Awards and the IRB Rugby Sevens. Altogether, Council-supported events had an estimated economic impact of \$50 million.
- Positively Wellington Business won a national award for its business support activities, and launched the Greater Wellington Industry Development Centre aimed at lifting the performance of the city's manufacturing sector.

ENVIRONMENT

We look after the city's 34+ square kilometres of reserve land, as well as beaches, coastline, and botanical gardens. We fund Wellington Zoo and the Karori Sanctuary, and work to develop other world-class nature-based visitor attractions such as the Marine Education Centre. We also: provide water supply, stormwater and sewage disposal; provide recycling and waste disposal services; offer grants for environmental initiatives; run the Kiwi Point Quarry; and promote energy efficiency and sustainability.

Though Wellington enjoys a stunning natural environment, we also face some significant challenges. Like other cities, we need to find ways of becoming more sustainable – to address broad issues such as climate change – by producing fewer greenhouse gas emissions, dumping less waste, using resources such as water and energy more efficiently, and protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.

Over the period to 2009, key priorities include promoting water and energy efficiency, improving protection of streams, developing a coherent plan to address biodiversity issues, and strengthening our partnerships with stakeholders to increase environmental awareness, community participation, and the achievement of environmental goals.

During the year, we made progress on most of these priorities. We asked for public input on a Biodiversity Action Plan to restore and protect streams, coast and bush areas. We also developed a stream protection programme and continued restoration work within the Kaiwharawhara catchment. We adopted an ambitious goal of becoming a carbon neutral city by 2050. And we strengthened community engagement through our environmental grants process and by funding environmental education in schools.

Other environment highlights included:

- Otari Wilton's Bush and Wellington Zoo both celebrated their centenaries. We committed \$15 million to a 10-year redevelopment of the zoo, which includes a new entrance plaza, bird aviaries and animal hospital, and redeveloped monkey islands.
- We completed plans for upgrades of the Owhiro Bay quarry site and Tinakori Hill, bought 70 hectares of ridge top farmland to add to the Outer Green Belt, and made a commitment to a long-term upgrade and expansion of the Town Belt/Outer Green Belt track network.
- We completed the new Te Aro stormwater culvert and started upgrades of the Johnsonville and Wakefield/Mercer/Victoria Street sewer mains.



CULTURAL WELLBEING

We fund the city's popular art galleries and museums, operate Toi Poneke – the Wellington Arts Centre, and support the NZ International Arts Festival, the St James Theatre and the NZ Symphony Orchestra. We also provide cultural grants, support community events and festivals, and run the City Archives.

Wellington's arts and culture scene is thriving. Our key goal is to maintain this strength, and to ensure that all Wellingtonians can participate in the city's cultural life, be that through artistic expression or simply sharing in a victory at the stadium.

Over the period to 2009, our key priorities include: protecting and enhancing local 'sense of place'; enhancing the area at the top of the Cable Car; strengthening our partnerships with arts organisations; and engaging more effectively with grass-roots arts and cultural communities. During the year, progress was made on several initiatives that contributed to these priorities. We committed to a \$3.4m expansion of the City Gallery, and continued our support for the new photography and portrait gallery to host exhibitions in Shed 11. A Matariki festival was added to our programme of 100+ arts and cultural events and several new public artworks were installed. The government also confirmed funding for the School of Music proposed for Jack Illot Green, which we are also supporting.

SOCIAL AND RECREATION

We provide housing for people whose needs are not met by state housing or the private housing market, fund projects to help homeless people, support community organisations, and provide community centres and halls. We also work to protect public health and safety through projects such as monitoring the city centre, banning liquor consumption in public in parts of the city, licensing food and liquor outlets, animal control, regulating other public health risks, providing toilets and preparing the city to deal with emergencies such as earthquakes. We also provide two cemeteries.

Our recreation work includes: providing libraries, playgrounds, swimming pools, recreation centres, sports fields and marinas; running recreation programmes; and reducing the costs of using sport and recreation facilities for people who have community services cards.

Our key challenges include providing for a population that is growing in size and diversity, and catering for a wider range of recreation activities.

Over the period to 2009, priorities include increasing the value of community facilities to their communities, promoting social cohesion and sound social infrastructure, and promoting participation in sport and recreation, particularly for youth.

During the year, we made progress on several initiatives that contribute to these priorities. Specifically:

- We worked with the Downtown Community Ministry to develop a survival guide for people on low incomes.
- The upgrade of Karori Park was completed.
- The Wellington Night Shelter reopened. We provided funding to help with its refurbishment.
- A new community centre opened in Tawa, a new hall in Newtown, and the Oriental Bay band rotunda was opened for community use.

During the year, we agreed to form a partnership with the government to upgrade our social housing. The partnership will see the government invest \$220 million, to be used for work such as improving building code compliance (including earthquake strengthening), insulation and ventilation, safety and security, upgrading kitchens and bathrooms, enhancing community facilities, and reconfiguring many Council bedsits into larger accommodation.

We also started funding the Healthy Homes project, which installs insulation and carries out other heating efficiency upgrades in the homes of low income people.

ENGAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE

Our governance work includes all of the activities that make us accountable to the people of Wellington: running local elections; holding meetings of the Council and its committees, and of community boards; producing annual plans and reports, along with policies and strategies to guide our work; and seeking feedback on our proposals from members of the public, Maori and stakeholder groups.

It also includes informing residents about our activities and services, through our call centre and service centre, and working with mana whenua to ensure they have a say in the development of the city.

The key challenge we face is to increase resident participation levels and build trust and confidence in civic decision-making. Our priorities for the period to 2009 include improving the transparency and quality of processes for public involvement in civic decision-making, improving consultation, and increasing participation rates in democratic processes. During the year, we adopted a new Engagement Policy setting out how we involve people in our decision-making. We also increased resourcing for our website and took steps to allow the website to host online petitions from residents. Our website, contact centre and annual report all won national awards (see page vii).

Other highlights for 2006/07:

- We carried out a representation review to determine ward boundaries and councillor numbers for the 2007 council elections.
- We commissioned a book about Wellington's civic history, *Wellington: Biography of a City*. The book is popular and is now in its second print run.