

What are youth concerns about housing and how can they be addressed through District Plan changes?

Outcomes from consultation with the District Plan youth reference group

What are young people's concerns?

The youth reference group was presented with a range of strategic issues that are being addressed through the District Plan Review. Housing was identified as their top issue of interest, with the environment and harbour coming a close second. For this reason, housing was selected as the "go-deep" issue for the group to work on.

The group framed five main concerns around housing (note there were other concerns that were out of scope of the District Plan Review that have been referred elsewhere in Council):

1. Currently there is not enough variety in the different types of housing. The main type of housing in Porirua (three bedroom house on a large section) isn't the type that suits young people best. More options are required.

2. Young people want to see housing that has strong connections to local shops and services and promotes healthy and safe ways to get around (eg walking or biking). They also want easy connections to Transmission Gully and Wellington City.

3. Young people are concerned that new housing development may not encourage community or integrate core values in living areas for people/families

4. Young people are concerned about the impact of housing on the environment and harbour. They want to see things in place that enhance and protect rather than harm.

5. Housing is increasingly unaffordable especially for young people trying to buy their first home.

These concerns are summarised to say that young people in Porirua want to see:

- **More variety in the types of houses**
- **Better connectivity within and in and out of the city**
- **Integration of community spaces and cultural values**
- **Protection of waterways and the environment**
- **Affordability**

What changes can be made to the District Plan to address these concerns?

When Council looked closely at the five concerns framed by young people, eight options for changes to the District Plan were identified. Some of these are an either/or option. Some options address more than one concern, while some address only one concern. Keeping the Status quo was presented as an option as well, though little support was shown by the group for this.

Priority options and preferences

Young people are strongly supportive of a **medium density zone close to the city centre** and consider this addresses a number of their concerns. Medium density allows for a greater variety of types of houses that could potentially be more affordable due to size and minimal land title.

These developments would address concerns around connectivity, as they will be situated near existing public transport networks. Young people aren't against the pepper-potting of medium density across the city, but feel that this approach wouldn't address their connectivity concerns.

Two options were presented as ways to encourage the integration of community spaces and cultural values into new developments: design guides and **design principles**.

Group members were uncomfortable with the potential for cookie cutter type community and cultural considerations that could be delivered through Design Guides. They felt the prescriptive approach wouldn't create variety that is inherent in community and cultural values, opting instead for design principles, that are developed in partnership with the community.

Members of the reference group are particularly concerned about the impact of development on the harbour and waterways and were fully supportive

of both **large scale Water Sensitive Urban Design, as well as smaller scale approaches**. They consider there to be no trade-offs to these approaches due to people's dependence on a healthy environment for sustaining life and well being.

They consider options like this as almost non-negotiable, and are fully supportive of Council introducing options that are bold and have impact.

The following table lists the options presented by the District Plan team, and feedback from the youth reference group on the extent they felt each option addressed their concerns. Their thoughts around pros and concerns are also included.

Summary of feedback on options

Possible District Plan option	More variety in the types of houses	Better connectivity within and in & out of city	Integration community spaces & cultural values	Protection waterways & the environment	Affordability	Benefits and pros	Trade-offs, cons and risks
Medium density zones in suburban and city centres that encourage duplexes, terraced housing, apartments and conversions						Allows for spatial grouping of “like” communities. More likely to encourage further development, and sets trend and precedent.	People would have to leave their neighbourhood to get a type of housing that sits them and that they can afford. Potentially more impact on the city infrastructure and questions around who pays for that. Changes to the city-scape could affect views of people already living there.
Allow medium density to be pepper-potted across the city (infill, conversions, terraces, duplexes)						Optimised by Transmission Gully and changes to the city’s entry points. More likely to get more variety.	Some developments will be further away from public transport. Unlikely that public transport would improve to reach further away places.
Rezone rural land for low density residential housing						Somewhere for young people to transition into when they move out of apartments or rentals. Requires deferred release of land for rezoning. Costly infrastructure bill.	Impact on natural landscape. Might end up only serving people who are moving into Porirua from other areas, such as Wellington city.
Design guides for community spaces and cultural values (compulsory descriptions and must have features)						Can be more tailored for a specific site.	
Design principles for community spaces and cultural values (general ideas and guidance but open to interpretation and variation)							
Large scale water sensitive design, eg streetscapes, swales, new wetlands						No trade-offs possible when it comes to reducing impacts on the environment. Health benefits, better quality of life.	
Small scale water sensitive design on all new buildings at site level, eg concrete cover limits						Want to see this across new and existing developments across the city.	
Sustainable design requirements in all new builds, eg solar panels, double glazing						Introduce futureproofing requirements so that, as people can afford solar panels, they are easier to install.	Increased upfront cost, long and uncertain return on investment for the first purchaser.

Thanks to reference group members:

Raniera Albert, Nani Kirk, Sia Fabian, Savannah Hunt, Sam Findlater, J’Adoube Elkington, Talia Soloa, Maisy Bentley, Marsella Hippolite, Katerina Siakiflo-Davis and Elyjana Roache.

KEY



Green – ooo yeah!!!



Yellow – mmm yeah



Red – yeah nah