



# **ON SLOW RESIDENTS' COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

## **Submission of the Onslow Resident's Community Association for the Upper Stebbings and Glenside West Development Concept**

The Onslow Residents Community Association represents the areas of Khandallah, Broadmeadows and Kaiwharawhara. Our purpose is to act as a conduit between the community and local authorities, represent the views and interests of our three communities, promote, develop and improve the public services and facilities for our community and foster a sense of community. We are a voice for our community.

### **Overview**

The Onslow Residents Community Association is pleased to make a submission on the WCC consultation on the Upper Stebbings and Glenside West Development Concept.

We strongly support the development of these areas for new housing, and support with some questions or reservations the development concept proposed by WCC. We believe that there can be some changes to include more standard and more higher density housing, to promote greater community diversity and to share the load of providing for 45,000 more people (as required by the National Policy Statement on Urban Development).

We will first make some general comments and then focus on the key questions in the submission documents. Finally, we will present recommendations for consideration by the Council.

We have reviewed the reports with links in the WCC Upper Stebbings and Glenside West development concept web page. We found the report "Upper Stebbings & Glenside West Concept Masterplan Summary" particularly useful, and have referred to it as the Masterplan Report below.

### **Project Justification**

The primary justification defined by WCC for considering the project is derived from the draft Spatial Plan: "Wellington City expects its population to grow by 50,000 – 80,000 people over the next 30 years. The Council's strategy to accommodate this growth includes intensification in the central city and around existing town centres, and developing new urban areas in Lincolnshire Farm, Upper Stebbings and Glenside West."

We do not support this premise for a number of reasons:

- The Spatial Plan is a long term future plan, and has not addressed the current situation. There is already a critical shortage of new housing in the Wellington region. We believe that the Upper Stebbings and Glenside West developments are needed to cater for the current demand for housing, not for future expected demand.
- The figure of 50,000 to 80,000 population growth has been widely challenged in many of the forums and submissions by various individuals and community organisations, including

ours. In this regard, the Council should correct its projected figures, and substantially update the policies in the Spatial Plan.

- The concept of unlimited intensification to 6-storey or higher developments in suburban areas of Wellington has also been widely challenged in submissions on the Spatial Plan. Even if the population projections do not eventuate, a few high-rise developments in suburban areas will significantly degrade the character of surrounding areas. This, combined with widespread infill housing replacing gardens and green space, will destroy the appeal of Wellington as the smallest green capital of the world. ORCA supports controlled intensification in selected areas, not wholesale redevelopment of suburban areas such as has been proposed in the area we represent. Therefore we strongly support new developments such as Upper Stebbings and Glenside West, which provide better quality home environments and reduce the demand for inappropriate intensification in existing suburbs.
- Another aspect of the population projections the Spatial Plan did not consider is the relationship of Wellington City with the surrounding city areas. The council should consider that over the years there has been an out-flow of people from Wellington to the Kapiti Coast, Porirua, Hutt Valley and to a lesser extent Wairarapa. This has been due to the lower cost of land and housing, and for retirees and others an opportunity for a quieter and more relaxed lifestyle with homes of a higher standard. This out-flow trend is likely to increase as the proportion of retirees rises, and opportunities for the home and garden environment people value become more difficult in Wellington. The Upper Stebbings and Glenside West areas, like areas such as Churton Park, Grenada North and Woodridge before them, are the only significant opportunity Wellington has to meet the demands of people for this lifestyle.

We believe that the Upper Stebbings and Glenside West areas should not be linked to the Spatial Plan and the resulting new District Plan. We recommend the project is undertaken by changes to the current District Plan. To link to the future District Plan would result in a high risk of delays because of the flaws in the planning process and expected ongoing challenges.

## Planning Area

Of the whole area covered by the plan, the only developments are one area in the north west (Stebbing's Valley) and a small one in the southern corner (Glenside). Most of the rest of the area is currently pine forest or grass farmland. There are only a few small patches proposed as SNAs in the WCC Backyard Tāonga plan, and this plan is itself only an early version based on aerial photographs which has overestimated the value of many areas.

We believe that the part of the area covered by the Masterplan Report which can be developed for housing has been substantially underestimated. As the report states, of the total study area of 300 hectares a total of 32 hectares would be in residential use. The standout example is the large pine forest in the north east section of the study area, which has no environmental value and in fact degrades the outlook and environment of southern Tawa. There are also areas around the planned subdivisions which could easily be included with a less conservative approach.

However we also believe that it is more important to get something going and not do more planning. Most of the rest of the area in the plan should be designated for future investigation. Also infrastructure should be designed so that the existing areas can be expanded radially and connect to the remaining areas in future. The total area should be able to support 3-5 times the proposed 655 properties. We are opposed to the proposed future rezoning of some remaining available land as lifestyle blocks.

## Planned Subdivisions

Within the two suburban areas, it appears that at most half of the land is subdivided, with the rest in parks and open green space. The developments proposed are for a relatively high quality subdivision (compared with recent developments such as Woodridge and Churton Park), where housing is divided up by accessible green space everywhere. A quote from a heading in the Masterplan Report: “By providing a range of good quality housing options within the local environment, people will want to live in a community that is unique in Wellington”.

The downside of this approach is that it will result in a higher average cost per section, a loss of opportunity for a larger number of houses, and it being more difficult to include ‘affordable’ housing within the development (see comments below). Should the main focus of the development target the upper income Wellington current or prospective population group as it currently does? It is a difficult question and we don’t have a clear opinion. We would just like to see it highlighted as a key strategic decision, and expectations of ‘affordable housing’ should not be promoted in the current plan.

## Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing is the most critical issue facing the housing sector, and we fully support any efforts to provide affordable housing. New subdivisions can provide options, provided land costs are low and infrastructure costs are shared across a large number of properties.

In the Masterplan report the issue is not specifically addressed, however there are areas allocated to terraced houses and apartments which we anticipate will be aimed at this sector of the market. We would like to see an increase in the allocations to these housing categories within both areas, focusing on the main transport routes. Taking the opportunity now would overcome many of the disadvantages of intensification in existing subdivisions, such as custom designed buildings instead of designs to fit defined boundaries (especially terraced housing), everyone knowing in advance where the high density developments will be instead of the destructive effects of ‘springing up next door’, being able to plan parking and other facilities (e.g. wider roads), and having reasonably low rise installations are more pleasant to live in and do not tower over the local environment.

It is not clear whether the land and development costs of the project will make affordable housing viable. We anticipate that it will, but we recommend the Council carry out a more detailed assessment of the options and opportunities with a view to increasing the size of the areas allocated to apartments and terraced housing.

## Approach to Development

The Masterplan Report provides a detailed plan for development of the new subdivisions. It goes down to the level of street plans, completed subdivision into properties and definition of the type of development permitted on each property, earthworks for land preparation, local infrastructure development, and designations and plans for protected areas. This suggests that detailed planning and development will be undertaken or managed by WCC, to prepare for land sales to individual home owners. There are no or at best very limited opportunities for developers to acquire larger parcels of land and make their own development plans. One simple example is that retirement villages or complexes will not be an option. We would like to know if there has been any consultation with the property development community in preparing these plans. If not, this should be undertaken as soon as possible with a view to making the planned development more flexible to accommodate larger scale projects.

If comprehensive planning is to be carried out by the Council, we would be concerned about the potential for delays and would recommend a firm commitment to a timetable and resource allocation.

## Transport and Infrastructure

We support the conclusions of the Tonkin & Taylor Transport Assessment report, and recommend that some of the recommendations are considered by the Council as prerequisites to the development. In particular, we recommend the park and ride facilities at Takapu Rd and Johnsonville, which are already under pressure, to be considered for upgrades.

The safety issues and increase in vehicle traffic on Middleton Rd was of particular concern to one of our committee members. This road is the main cycling route between Tawa / Porirua and Wellington and has high usage. It is already hazardous for cyclists because of the high vehicle speeds and lack of clearance on corners, and he can attest to this because he had a significant accident cycling on this road. More traffic will make the hazard worse. The T&T report explains the difficulty of improving the road, but we would encourage any moves to do so.

The Masterplan Report provides for local community facilities such as cafe, playgrounds and walking tracks, but not for larger scale amenities such as schools, supermarkets / shopping, medical services etc. These are assumed to be provided by existing adjacent communities. There is also no reference to bulk connections to the area for water and sewage. Is the infrastructure in the adjacent areas able to support the increased load, and if not what are the development requirements? A master plan for further development and how these will be provided more locally is required.

## Answers to the Questions on Objectives

Answers to the Questions on Objectives set out in the feedback form are listed below, followed by some general comments.

1. Housing supply — The development concept increases the housing supply by enabling residential development in areas close to existing communities, infrastructure and services.

*Agree (but it could be better by providing for a larger number of houses and more affordable housing)*

2. Housing choice — The development concept enables a choice of housing types (such as detached houses and townhouses) and sizes (from larger family houses to smaller units suitable for single person households).

*Disagree (the proposed plans define the housing types in detail for each property, so developers will have little choice and it is not clear that demand has been assessed)*

3. Access to green space — The development concept provides residents with varied green spaces, from local parks to larger reserves.

*Agree*

4. Natural areas — The development concept retains existing native bush and streams and incorporates them into the open space network.

*Agree (but the extent of these areas is limited and only a small proportion of the green space provided in the development concept)*

5. Transport — The development concept connects the new community with the existing transport network and supports future public transport use.

*Agree*

6. Walking tracks — The development concept complements the surrounding network of walking tracks.

*Disagree (the development concept provides new walking tracks and facilities within the area, but we couldn't find any information on links to established walking tracks)*

7. Stormwater management — The development concept makes room for rainwater in green corridors in order to improve water quality and prevent flooding.

*Disagree (we couldn't find any information in the report, but don't see it as an issue as it should be easy to achieve during detailed design)*

We find it difficult to understand how the questions above can be seen as assessing whether the proposed development represents the goals supported by Wellingtonians, or whether it meets appropriate core objectives of the development plan. They are only considering specific details, and even then not the most relevant ones. We recommend the Council ignore the results of these survey questions when assessing the project.

## Recommendations

We offer the following recommendations to the Council:

1. The Council support the subdivision development plans in principle.
2. The initial planning process should be based entirely on modifications to the existing District Plan and the justification on meeting current demand for new housing, with no link to the Spatial Plan or the resulting new District Plan. The new District Plan can carry over the planning profiles from the existing Plan at the appropriate time.
3. Council planners give more detailed consideration to whether increasing the size of the areas allocated to apartments and terraced housing would result in viable affordable homes.
4. The Council designate most of the rest of the study area covered by the plan for future investigation, with a view to expanding the area allocated to housing. We are opposed to the proposed future rezoning of some remaining available land as lifestyle blocks. Current infrastructure design should take into account future expansion into a greater area. The provision of education and social amenities needs further consideration in this context,
5. The Council consult with the property development community with a view to making the planned development more flexible to accommodate larger scale projects to improve efficiency and meet demand.
6. If comprehensive planning is to be carried out or managed by the Council, rather than property developers, we recommend a firm commitment to a timetable and resource allocation.
7. The Council determine whether the 3-waters infrastructure providing bulk connections to the area is able to support the increased load, and if not identify and plan the development requirements.
8. The Council ignore the results of the survey questions when assessing the project value and viability.

## Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Please feel free to contact our association at [onslowcommunityassociation@gmail.com](mailto:onslowcommunityassociation@gmail.com) or by phone on 021 750 633 regarding this submission.

Yours sincerely

Lawrence Collingbourne, President, on behalf of

Onslow Residents' Community Association.