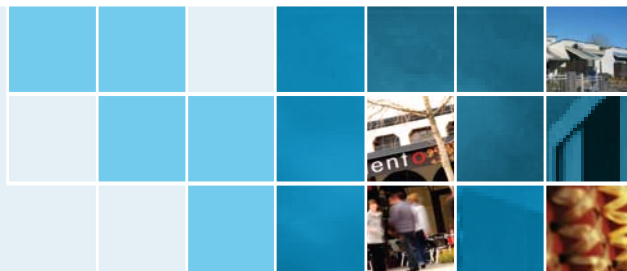


Executive summary



Most New Zealanders live in urban areas, so the way our urban areas operate has a huge influence on the economic performance of our cities, how our society works, the health of our environment and our quality of life.

Equipping New Zealand's cities to face challenges such as housing affordability, changing demographics, and climate change will become more and more important as our population grows. Planning and building our cities to meet these challenges is called 'sustainable urban development'.

This discussion document sets out ideas for improved or new ways to help deliver sustainable urban development in New Zealand.

To make our cities more sustainable...

... new developments and the redevelopment of suburbs and town centres must focus on using land, infrastructure and assets more effectively. Intensifying land use in strategic areas, in particular, could provide New Zealanders with more housing choices, viable public transport and thriving town centres.

Urban development...

... is needed in these strategic locations, at a sufficient scale and rate of change to ensure that the growth of our cities is managed sustainably.

Local authorities and developers...

... have identified a number of barriers and implementation difficulties that can prevent the delivery of large-scale sustainable urban development projects. These barriers include:

- capacity and capability issues in all levels of government and the development industry
- limited co-ordination of national, regional and local planning and implementation for large-scale urban development
- ineffective integration between land use and transport planning, and transport, utility and other service providers to implement sustainable urban development
- difficulties in funding urban development projects
- difficulties assembling useful parcels of land from fragmented groups of properties (particularly for redeveloping existing neighbourhoods and town centres), or in acquiring and/or ensuring appropriate development of strategic sites
- the length and nature of planning and development control processes
- limits to achieving social outcomes and public benefits (such as affordable housing) through market mechanisms.

A number of these issues could be addressed through ...

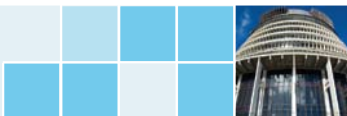
... **improving the ways that the community, local and central government, service and utility providers, and the development sector work together.**

There may also be ways to **improve the use of existing tools** to encourage and control development. We can also increase the availability of urban development skills in New Zealand, up-skill and support urban development practitioners, and better monitor sustainable urban development progress and issues.

A number of sustainable urban development issues are...

... explored in this discussion document. Most of them are relevant all over the world, but some factors relate only to New Zealand. Possible new tools or powers to deal with each of these issues are suggested.

The document discusses:



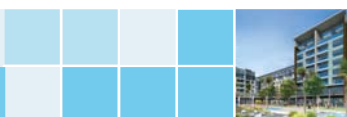
- **what central and local government could do to support sustainable urban development**, as policy makers, developers, investors or capability builders



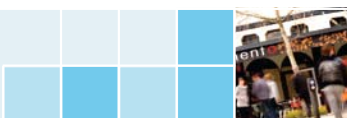
- possible **improvements to co-ordination between national, regional and local government**, and mechanisms to **better integrate land use and transport planning with the provision of utilities, transport and other services**



- potential **ways to fund sustainable urban development**



- **how to assemble parcels of land in strategic locations** to support sustainable urban development



- **whether planning processes and development control can be streamlined** to encourage sustainable urban development



- ways to improve **housing supply, choice and affordability** in sustainable urban development.

“Cities are an invention to minimise travel and maximise exchange.”

David Engwicht, social innovator

To bring together these elements...

... a new enabling 'place-based' approach to sustainable urban development is proposed. A 'place-based' approach would focus on using new and existing tools and powers to create unique solutions for our unique urban places, rather than creating a standard formula to apply to urban areas throughout the country. **This proposed approach is outlined in the document.**

The proposed approach...

... would create legislation to allow ministers to declare that **special tools or powers** could be applied in identified strategic or complex areas. These tools or powers could be used by an **urban development organisation**, such as a council-controlled organisation, a crown entity, or a joint venture company with public sector involvement, to implement sustainable development in accordance with a **community-developed master development plan**. These organisations would have carefully prescribed objectives, boundaries and lifetimes. This enabling legislation could be supported by improvements in the use of existing urban development processes, as well as a range of non-regulatory or legislative tools.

This new approach...

... to sustainable urban development aims to **improve the delivery of the right kind of development, in the right areas, at the right time.**

Overseas examples of this type of approach to comprehensive, future-focused urban developments aim to deliver more vibrant and successful places. The results are often a more intensive form of mixed residential and commercial development, with:



- better quality public spaces and amenities



- stronger local economic activity



- an emphasis on social success – strong communities, community safety and a wider range of housing choices, including more affordable housing options



- less reliance on car travel.

We welcome

... your suggestions and comments on the sustainable urban development issues, options, and proposed 'place-based' approach explored in this document.