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Waipā District Council
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Proposed Plan Change 26 – Residential Zone Intensification

I am opposed to the Central government directive for the Waipa District Council to do a compulsory change to their District Plan to increase and accelerate housing intensification in Waipā, under the Residential Zone Intensification (Plan Change 26).

With the purpose of Proposed Plan Change 26 being to incorporate into the Waipā District Plan the medium density residential standards as set out in Schedule 3A of the Resource Management Act 1991 and the proposed plan change also amending existing provisions in the District Plan to accommodate the new medium density residential standards, including consequential changes to give effect to the legislation, I am totally opposed to the entire proposal.

I qualify this with the fact that it is unrealistic for a lay person to sift through in detail the 245-page document that is the 'Proposed Plan Change 26: Residential Zone Intensification'.

These changes have the potential to increase housing density in the residential zones of Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Kihikihi, by allowing landowners to extend or build up to three houses, up to three storeys high, without needing a resource consent, as well as with no minimum lot sizes required for residential subdivisions (within certain conditions), which will obviously mean more dwellings will be able to go on sections than have been allowed previously.

I believe most parts of the residential zones in Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Kihikihi, will not have the capacity in their infrastructure (stormwater, water, wastewater, roads, etc) to support this kind of housing intensification.

Over time these changes have the potential to significantly change our neighbourhoods and the unique character Waipā District currently enjoys in its towns.

I consider this proposed change could be more suited to other growth areas in New Zealand, such as the larger cities, including Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch, etc, but definitely not to the smaller towns in the Waipā District.

I note that the Waipā District Council has stated that it does not support these changes and is not in agreement with the 'one-size-fits-all' approach and has made its views clear to Government.

It has been stated, that all councillors were united in their fight against 'uncontrolled urban intensification' and voted for option three at a council meeting on 5 April 2022, with this option providing the potential for the Council to maintain some control over where mandatory intensification occurs within residential zones. I support this move.

The new laws will likely force sweeping changes to residential neighbourhoods in Cambridge.

What is the Labour Government thinking; do they want to reduce everyone to the lowest common denominator?

I for one, do not want my property value devalued by some 3-story monstrosity being built beside or near me, that will affect the environment within which I live, have potential to increase noise levels and create a loss of privacy. I purchased my property in Cambridge and moved to this delightful town, to avoid these exact things.

Cambridge needs to maintain its much envied character and not allow this to be eroded away by idiotic, hairbrained, nonsensical schemes.

We paid a premium to live in a unique subdivision/suburb of Cambridge, with many desirable attributes and features and do not want this spoiled by the introduction of this ill-conceived law and required plan change.

There is an example in Leamington, on the corner of Burns and Campbell Streets; who would want this built next to their home?

Great neighbourhoods with lots of trees - they call Cambridge "Tree Town"; this attractive and envied environment will be lost forever. We've all seen the results around the country of intensive housing (or "medium density residential standards" as it is termed in the new law), it's not long before it's gone to rack and ruin and looks terrible and presents unsavoury elements for the town. We certainly don't want this for Cambridge.

The character of Cambridge is admired by most; don't let this be overtaken, it will change Cambridge forever.

More houses, or dwellings, on less land; some people may want that, but most I would venture to say, don't. We want the freedom to choose, not have it forced on us by a totalitarian government, and certainly if we've chosen a place to live (purchased a property), we certainly do not want a monstrosity built beside, or anywhere near us. Surely, we deserve and even have the right to this.

Multi-unit and apartments have their place and the Waipā District Council is already working alongside developers to cater for this need, but we don't want multi-story monstrosities appearing all over our town.

As mentioned, this will put a severe strain on Cambridge's infrastructure, including water, waste water pipes, stormwater, etc; how ironic when we have a government also trying to force on us the "Three Waters" regime, to avoid exactly this.

This new regime is certainly not suited to Cambridge.

Kiwibank Senior Economist Jeremy Couchman has said the country will "start accumulating a surplus of housing" in about a year. So why do we need such a new law at all?

According to StatsNZ, it is estimated a total of over 41,000 homes were built in the year to June 2022, which is by far the largest number added to New Zealand's housing stock in the data going back to 1991. To put this in perspective the peak in construction during the mid-2000's only managed to produce a net 30,000 homes. At the same time, new housing demand has slowed as population growth hit its lowest rate since the 1980's.

Net migration, the main swing factor in population growth, posted a sizable 11,500 outflow of long-term migrants from New Zealand's shores in the year to June 2022. Overall population growth slowed to just 0.2%, its lowest rate since 1986.

New Zealand's actual housing shortage reduced to an estimated 23,000 homes, massively down from the revised 57,000 shortage estimated last year.

"The current yawning gap between supply and demand points to New Zealand's cumulative housing shortage disappearing over the next 12 months."

A growing surplus of houses ahead is likely to weigh on New Zealand's housing market and generate a slow recovery in house prices, with the market already being in retreat. It should be noted, that in addition, house sales activity this year is down by around a third compared with a year ago.

Waipā District Council is classified by the Government as a Tier 1 territorial authority because we share a boundary with Hamilton City Council, are a high growth Council and are classified as part of the greater Hamilton area. This means it is compulsory for Waipā to implement medium density residential standards to enable intensification.

Why do the towns of Waipā need this intensification at all? We don't!

In addition, I state, "I could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission" and "I am directly affected by an effect of the subject matter that – (a) adversely affects the environment; and (b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition".

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

I support the deletion of the new density standards amendments and the subsequent lobbying and discussions with Central government this will require.

I wish Cambridge to retain its character and appeal as the "Tree Town" of New Zealand and not have this and existing properties adversely affected by increased residential intensification.

Kind Regards



Robert Carr