



MEMORANDUM | 07 June 2022

TO Jane O'Loughlin, LIVE Wellington
FROM Emanuel Kalafateli and Annita Wood, Research New Zealand
SUBJECT Opinion Survey (#5290)

Executive summary

This report presents the results of an online opinion survey completed with a random sample of 406 Wellington residents between 24 May and 5 June 2022.¹ At the beginning of the survey, respondents confirmed that they lived in the area covered by the Wellington City Council (a map was provided to assist with this) and they also identified their status (i.e. a ratepayer (or living in a home owned by a close family member) or renter).

Quotas were set so that approximately 50% of the sample interviewed were ratepayers and 50% non-ratepaying residents.²

The purpose of the survey was to measure their opinion with respect to:

1. Housing density and particularly in regard to increasing the number of dwellings in an area.
2. Wellington's character areas (viz. parts of Thorndon, Newtown, Mt. Cook, Aro Valley and Mount Victoria).
3. The factors that will influence the way they will vote in this year's local body elections in October (assuming they will vote).
4. The current mayor's and councillors' performance over the last three years.

A copy of the survey questionnaire is included in this report as Appendix A.

¹ Results based on a sample of 406 are subject to a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 4.9% (at the 95% confidence level). This means, for example, that had the survey found 50% respondents were satisfied with the performance of the mayor and councillors over the last three years, we could be 95% sure we would have got the same result had we interviewed everyone eligible to complete the survey – give or take 4.9% (i.e. the percentage satisfied would have fallen between 45.1% and 54.9%).

² According to Statistics New Zealand, 52% of resident Wellingtonians are property owners (including via a trust) and 48% are renters.



Key findings

The key results of the survey may be summarised as follows:

1. Nine factors were presented to respondents as factors that might influence the way they will vote in this year's local body elections. Almost all but three of the factors were rated as influential by 50% or more of respondents, with infrastructure and transportation being the two factors most frequently identified (69% and 62% respectively).
 - a. '**Housing density and the district plan**' was one of the three factors rated as influential by less than 50% of respondents. Forty-five percent stated that this would be influential in the way they will vote in the local body elections.
2. Respondents were asked to consider three options with respect to **housing density**, two of which were in favour of more housing density in Wellington City. This was defined as being a situation in which the number of dwellings in an area is increased, usually by removing stand-alone houses and replacing them with apartments, townhouses or terraced housing.

In general, respondents supported more housing density, provided it was managed via planning rules, etc. (75%) as opposed to being left to the free market (4%).

- a. Seventeen percent of respondents were **not** in favour of more housing density in Wellington.
3. Respondents were also asked to consider how Wellington City should ideally find the **room for new housing**. They were asked to choose one of four possible options.

Of the four possible options presented to them, most respondents (47%) stated they were in favour of making use of under-utilised land in the central city and inner-city suburbs. This compares with 20% in favour of more in-fill housing in the outer suburbs and 17% in favour of greenfields developments on the outskirts of the city.

- a. In contrast, eight percent stated they were in favour of demolishing heritage houses in the inner-city suburbs.
4. Respondents were polarised when they were asked about the future of Wellington's **character suburbs**. Specifically, 43% expressed the view that these suburbs should be protected as much as possible, while the same percentage (43%) stated that there should be a 'careful balance' aimed at freeing up more room for intensification, but protecting character suburbs.
 - a. In comparison, 12% overtly stated they did **not** care about character and heritage.



5. Finally, most respondents were in favour of removing the '**pre-1930s demolition rule**' to some extent, despite being told that it was possible that this could result in dwellings of up to 6 stories high being built in the inner-city suburbs without consent. Specifically, four percent were in favour of completely removing the rule, 16% removing 66%, 19% a smaller percentage such as 50%, and 30% a much smaller percentage such as 25%.
 - a. In comparison, 25% overtly stated they did not support the proposal to remove 66% of the rule.



Detailed results

Factors likely to influence voting in this year's general elections

The main analysis variable we have used to report the results in this and the following sections is whether the respondent was a ratepayer or a non-ratepaying resident.

The following table shows that a relatively high (81%) of respondents stated they intend to vote in this year's local body elections in October, with this being significantly higher for ratepayers.

Table 1: Intention to vote in this year's local body elections

Q6. Council elections are coming up in September/October this year. Do you intend voting in these elections?

Unweighted base =	Total	Ratepayer	Renter	Would prefer not to say
	%	%	%	%
Yes	81	86	75	67
No	6	5	6	11
Don't know	13	9	18	22
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.

The table overleaf shows the extent to which respondents who indicated they would vote in this year's local body elections (81% or 330) said that the way they will vote will be influenced by each of nine factors. Respondents rated each factor on a 7-point scale, with 'won't influence me at all' being at one extreme (1) and 'will influence me a lot' at the other extreme (7). They could also say they 'didn't know'.

The table lists the factors in terms of the extent to which they were mentioned as being influential (i.e. rated with a 6 or 7). In this regard:

- ◆ Almost all but three of the nine factors were rated as influential by 50% or more of respondents.
- ◆ Two, in particular, were rated more highly than others; namely 'infrastructure – ageing water pipes, etc.' (69% influential) and 'transportation – roads, cycleways and buses' (62% influential).
- ◆ Ratepayers rated these more influential than renters, as they did other factors (e.g. cost of rates).
- ◆ On the other hand, renters rated other factors as being influential (e.g. affordable housing).
- ◆ 'Housing density and the district plan' was one of the three factors rated as influential by less than 50% of respondents. Forty-five percent stated that this will be influential in the way they will vote in the local body elections.



Table 2: Factors influencing voting

Q7. Please rate each of the following issues in terms of the way they will influence the way you vote.

	Total %	Ratepayer %	Renter %	Would prefer not to say %
Infrastructure – ageing water pipes, etc.				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	2	1	4	0
3-5	28	23	39	17
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	69	76	57	84
Don't know	0	0	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Transport - roads, cycleways, buses				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	3	4	3	0
3-5	34	34	36	17
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	62	63	59	83
Don't know	1	0	2	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Affordable housing				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	9	12	5	17
3-5	35	48	18	0
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	55	40	76	83
Don't know	1	1	2	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Crime				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	6	7	6	0
3-5	41	40	45	0
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	53	53	49	100
Don't know	0	0	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100
The cost of rates				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	19	9	32	33
3-5	29	27	32	17
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	51	64	32	50
Don't know	2	1	4	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Continued



Table 2: Factors influencing voting (continued)

Q7. Please rate each of the following issues in terms of the way they will influence the way you vote.

	Total %	Ratepayer %	Renter %	Would prefer not to say %
Councillors working together				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	8	8	9	0
3-5	38	34	45	17
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	51	57	40	83
Don't know	3	1	5	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Housing density and the district plan				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	5	4	9	17
3-5	48	53	44	34
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	45	44	45	50
Don't know	2	1	3	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Climate change				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	14	16	14	0
3-5	42	44	39	34
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	44	41	45	67
Don't know	0	0	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Three waters				
Unweighted base =	330*	196	128	6**
Won't influence me at all (1-2)	13	15	12	0
3-5	40	37	47	0
Will influence me a lot (6-7)	43	45	38	100
Don't know	4	4	4	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Sub-sample based on those respondents who indicated they would vote in this year's local body elections.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.

Note that one of the factors related to 'councillors working together'. Just over one-half (51%) rated this as likely to be influential in the way they would vote and with this in mind, a further question was asked about the performance of the mayor and councillors over the last three years. The table overleaf shows a relatively high level of dissatisfaction, with almost three-quarters (71%) rating their performance as poor (based on a combination of those rating their performance as 'very poorly' and 'not that well'). This compares with 17% rating their performance in positive terms.



Table 3: Performance of mayor and councillors

Q8. Thinking about Wellington City Council, how well do you think the current mayor and councillors have performed over the last 3 years?

Unweighted base =	Total	Ratepayers	Renters	Would prefer not to say
	406	227	170	9**
%	%	%	%	%
Very poorly	25	30	19	22
Not that well	46	46	47	33
Quite well	15	15	16	11
Very well	2	2	1	11
Don't know	12	7	18	22
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.



Housing density

Respondents were asked to consider three options with respect to housing density. This was defined as being a situation in which the number of dwellings in an area is increased, usually by removing stand-alone houses and replacing them with apartments, townhouses or terraced housing.

The three options included two relating to more housing density (one which is managed via planning rules and supported by good urban design, and the other in which housing density is left to the free market). The table below shows that respondents supported more housing density, provided it was managed via planning rules, etc. (75%). In comparison, just four percent felt that housing density should be left to the free market.

Seventeen percent of respondents were not in favour of more housing density in Wellington.

Note that opinion did not differ significantly between ratepayers and renters.

Table 4: Housing density

Q2. The next few questions are about housing density. That is, increasing the number of dwellings in an area, usually by removing stand-alone houses and replacing them with apartments, townhouses or terraced housing. Which one of the following best describes your view on housing density?

	Total	I (or a close family member or relative) own the house I live in at the moment	Someone else owns the home I live in at the moment	Would prefer not to say
Unweighted base =	406	227	170	9**
%	%	%	%	%
I support greater housing density as long as it is subject to planning rules which support good urban design and allows some protection for the amenity of neighbours, e.g. sunlight access and privacy	75	78	73	44
I support greater housing density but it's better to leave it to developers and landowners to determine how it should turn out – the fewer controls the better	4	4	5	11
I don't support more housing density in Wellington	17	16	18	33
Don't know	3	2	5	11
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.



Making room for new housing

Still on the subject of housing, respondents were asked to consider how Wellington City should ideally find the room for new housing. They were asked to choose one of four possible options.

The table below shows that most respondents (47%) stated they were in favour of making use of under-utilised land in the central city and inner-city suburbs. This compares with 20% in favour of more in-fill housing in the outer suburbs and 17% in favour of greenfields developments on the outskirts of the city.

In contrast, eight percent stated they were in favour of demolishing heritage houses in the inner-city suburbs.

Note that there were some differences in the way ratepayers and renters favoured making use of under-utilised land in the central city and inner-city suburbs.

Table 5: Making room for new housing

Q3. In your view, how should Wellington ideally find the room for new housing. Please select one of the following.

Unweighted base =	Total 406 %	Ratepayers 227 %	Renters 170 %	Would prefer not to say 9** %
Make use of under-utilised land in the central city and inner-city suburbs (e.g. car parks or redevelopment of commercial buildings)	47	51	42	33
Demolish heritage houses in the inner-city suburbs to make way for townhouses and apartments	8	7	9	0
Allow more in-fill housing in the outer suburbs	20	19	22	11
Greenfields developments on the edge of the city	17	19	15	11
Don't know	8	4	11	44
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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The future of character suburbs

Two specific questions were asked about Wellington City's character areas. The first of these sought to obtain respondents' general views about such areas.

The table below shows that respondents were polarised in terms of their opinions. Forty-three percent expressed the view that these suburbs should be protected as much as possible, while the same percentage (43%) stated that there should be a 'careful balance' aimed at freeing up more room for intensification, but protecting character suburbs.

In comparison, 12% overtly stated they did not care about character and heritage.

Note that there were some differences in the way ratepayers and renters believed that Wellington's character suburbs added a lot to the city's identity and we should therefore try and protect it.

Table 6: The future of character suburbs

Q4. Now we have some questions about Wellington City's character areas (e.g. parts of Thorndon, Newtown, Mt Cook, Aro Valley and Mount Victoria, made up of mainly Victorian-era wooden houses). Which one of the following best describes your view about these suburbs?

Unweighted base =	Total 406 %	Ratepayers 227 %	Renters 170 %	Would prefer not to say 9** %
Wellington's character suburbs add a lot to Wellington's identity and we should try and protect them as much as possible	43	48	35	78
I don't care about character and heritage and I don't mind if protections for character and heritage are removed	12	12	14	0
I would like a careful balance between freeing up more room for intensification and protecting character suburbs from destruction	43	40	49	11
Don't know	1	0	2	11
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.



The second question sought to gain respondents' opinions with respect to the removal of two-thirds of the 'pre-1930s demolition rule' and the possibility that dwellings of up to 6 stories high could be built without resource consent in the inner-city suburbs.

Overall, respondents expressed a view in favour of some degree of removal of character protection, either in terms of:

- ◆ A complete removal (4%).
- ◆ Or, a 66% removal as proposed (16%).
- ◆ Or, a slightly smaller percentage such as 50% (19%).
- ◆ Or, a much smaller percentage still such as 25% (30%).

In comparison, 25% overtly stated they did not support the proposal.

Note that opinion did not differ significantly between ratepayers and renters.

Table 7: The effects of removing the 'pre-1930s demolition rule'

Q5. Currently, character areas of Wellington are protected by a 'pre-1930s demolition rule' that means a resource consent is needed to demolish houses built before 1930. The current draft district plan proposes to remove 66% (two-thirds) of this protection from Wellington's inner-city suburbs, making it easier to knock down character and heritage houses. Where this protection is removed, dwellings of up to 6 stories high will be able to be build without a resource consent in Thorndon, Mt Cook, Aro Valley, Newtown, and Mount Victoria.

Which one of the following best describes your view of this change?

Unweighted base =	Total	Ratepayers	Renters	Would prefer not to say
	406	227	170	9**
	%	%	%	%
I support removing 66% of the current character protection	16	15	19	0
I would be happier with a slightly smaller amount (e.g. 50% of the character protection being removed)	19	19	19	11
I would be happier with a much smaller amount (e.g. 25% being removed)	30	32	27	11
I would like all character protection to be removed	4	4	5	0
I don't want any character protection to be removed	25	26	20	67
Don't know	6	4	9	11
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.



Appendix A – Survey questionnaire



LIVE Wellington

OPINION SURVEY - IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING WELLINGTON RESIDENTS (DATED 18-05-22)

Research New Zealand P/N #5290

May 2022

Logo: RNZ

Tēnā koe. Thank you for agreeing to complete this important survey.

Survey purpose

The purpose of this survey is to seek your views about important issues facing Wellington City. The local body elections will be held in September/October of this year and these issues are likely to be debated by the candidates who are running for your vote.

What's involved?

The survey takes just **5 minutes** to complete online, depending on your answers.

Confidentiality

Research New Zealand abides by the Code of Practice of the European Society of Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR), which guarantees confidentiality. This has stricter requirements than the New Zealand Privacy Act 2020.

When the survey results are published, they will be in the form of summary statistics that do not identify any individual respondent. You can read more about our privacy policy [here](#).

Any questions?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Annita Wood at Research New Zealand (Annita.Wood@researchnz.com).

If you would like the text to appear larger in the survey, please **tick** this button.



Confirmation

- Q1. Please answer this question to confirm that you currently live in the area covered by the Wellington City Council. That is, the Wellington area as far north as Tawa and Ohariu, but not including Petone or the Hutt Valley. Click this [link](#) if you would like to check. [See map](#) <https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/your-council/elections/2019/wards/all-wellington-wards.pdf>

- 1I confirm that I live in the area covered by the Wellington City Council
- 2I do **not** live in the area **Terminate**
- 99 ...Prefer not to say **Terminate**

Q1a. Which one of the following best describes you:

- 1I (or a close family member or relative) own the house I live in at the moment
- 2Someone else owns the home I live in at the moment
- 99 ...Would prefer not to say

Q1b. Are you....?

Please select one option

- 1Male
- 2Female
- 3Gender diverse

Important issues facing Wellington City

- Q2. The next few questions are about **housing density**. That is, increasing the number of dwellings in an area, usually by removing stand-alone houses and replacing them with apartments, townhouses or terraced housing.

Which **one** of the following best describes your view on housing density?

- 1I support greater housing density as long as it is subject to planning rules which support good urban design and allows some protection for the amenity of neighbours, e.g. sunlight access and privacy
- 2I support greater housing density but it's better to leave it to developers and landowners to determine how it should turn out – the fewer controls the better
- 3I don't support more housing density in Wellington
- 98 ...Don't know

- Q3. In your view, how should Wellington ideally find the room for new housing. Please select **one** of the following.

- 1Make use of under-utilised land in the central city and inner city suburbs (e.g. car parks or redevelopment of commercial buildings)
- 2Demolish heritage houses in the inner-city suburbs to make way for townhouses and apartments
- 3Allow more in-fill housing in the outer suburbs
- 4Greenfields developments on the edge of the city
- 98 ...Don't know



- Q4. Now we have some questions about Wellington City's **character areas** (e.g. parts of Thorndon, Newtown, Mt Cook, Aro Valley and Mount Victoria, made up of mainly Victorian-era wooden houses).

Which **one** of the following best describes your view about these suburbs?

- 1Wellington's character suburbs add a lot to Wellington's identity and we should try and protect them as much as possible
- 2I don't care about character and heritage, and I don't mind if protections for character and heritage are removed
- 3I would like a careful balance between freeing up more room for intensification and protecting character suburbs from destruction
- 98 ...Don't know



Q5. Currently, character areas of Wellington are protected by a 'pre-1930s demolition rule' that means a resource consent is needed to demolish houses built before 1930.

The current draft district plan proposes to remove 66% (two-thirds) of this protection from Wellington's inner-city suburbs, making it easier to knock down character and heritage houses. Where this protection is removed, dwellings of up to 6 stories high will be able to be built without a resource consent in Thorndon, Mt Cook, Aro Valley, Newtown, and Mount Victoria.

Which **one** of the following best describes your view of this change?

- 1I support removing 66% of the current character protection
- 2I would be happier with a slightly smaller amount (e.g. 50% of the character protection being removed)
- 3I would be happier with a much smaller amount (e.g. 25% being removed)
- 4I would like all character protection to be removed
- 5I don't want any character protection to be removed
- 98 ...Don't know

Voting intentions and preferences

Q6. Council elections are coming up in September/October this year. Do you intend voting in these elections?

- 1Yes
- 2No
- 98 ...Don't know

Q7. **IF 0=1 ASK, ELSE SKIP** Please rate each of the following issues in terms of the way they will influence the way you vote?

Please select one answer for each statement. RDN.

	1 Won't influence me at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 Will influence me a lot	98 Don't know
a. The cost of rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Housing density and the district plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Transport – roads, cycleways, buses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Infrastructure (e.g. ageing water pipes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. 3 waters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Councillors working together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q8. Thinking about Wellington City Council, how well do you think the current mayor and councillors have performed over the last 3 years?

- 1Very poorly
- 2Not that well
- 3Quite well
- 4Very well
- 98 ...Don't know

Ngā mihi maioha. This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your time and your answers to the questions. You may now close your browser.