



## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Environment & Planning Committee

**FROM:** Sonya Leusink-Sladen, Policy Planner

**REFERENCE:** L334

**SUBJECT:** **RICHMOND INTENSIFICATION: URBAN DENSITY STUDY - REPORT REP10-07-04** - Report prepared for meeting of 1 July 2010

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### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about the Richmond Urban Density Study, a workstream to support both the Richmond Intensification Project and other Richmond development projects.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

The Richmond Urban Density Study concerns future residential growth and development in the Richmond urban area.

It aims to understand and address density issues associated with residential development in greenfields, brownfields (re-development) and infill situations. It has the primary focus of answering the question: “where and how should medium and high density residential development be managed by Council?”

The answers to this question are also expected to help in decision-making on town development in other urban areas in the District.

The study has arisen from directions given in reporting on residential intensification issues in both the Nelson-Richmond urban intensification project (September 2007, EP07/09/07 refers) and the Richmond east development area project (July 2009 EP09/07/08 refers). The Committee directed the assessment of appropriate locations and methods for encouraging higher density residential development in Richmond as a whole.

The study is also an aspect of the wider Richmond intensification project commenced in 2007 in collaboration with Nelson City, with an initial focus on the central area of Richmond.

More information about the study, including study objectives and the intended process, are contained in the Project Brief, attached to this report (see Appendix 1)

### **3. BACKGROUND**

In 2003 Council undertook a study examining growth options for the Richmond area, the “Richmond Development Study - Issues and Options for Growth”. The study identified and assessed options for residential and industrial growth in Richmond for the next 20 years.

While the 2003 RDS did guide Council to determining where Richmond could grow and expand into the future in general terms, it did not provide a framework for making decisions about how that growth ought to be managed to achieve good urban design outcomes.

Furthermore, it did not provide a detailed assessment of Richmond in terms of its ability to absorb more dense development, namely servicing, community amenities and long-term transportation networks necessary to successfully support a more dense population.

Since then a number of policy projects have commenced based on the study findings, looking into the future growth and development in specific locations, namely Richmond South, Richmond West and Richmond East.

The Richmond East Development Area policy report assessed the constraints associated with the TRMP Compact Density and Comprehensive Development frameworks. The report concluded that “quick fixing” the TRMP options for higher density residential development, without reference to locational criteria and the greater Richmond context, might cause inappropriate development in inappropriate locations, and was not worth the potential cost. The Committee directed staff to progress a Richmond-wide intensification study that would look at appropriate locations for higher density.

As well, the 2007 Nelson-Richmond Urban Intensification Study Stage 1 identified the need to investigate and analyse the opportunities, priorities and methods for locations to intensify. This follows the recognition that there are constraints and risks in attempting to encourage intensification “just anywhere” in urban areas. Urban intensification work in Richmond at first focussing on the central area, has paused while the present study is being addressed.

The Richmond Urban Density Study project thus has the aim of addressing the shortcomings earlier identified, and linking together Committee directions as they relate to residential intensification.

### **4. PROGRESS**

The project has been progressed in the following areas:

#### **4.1 Issues**

Issues, relating to both the expansion and intensification of residential living opportunities, have been raised by staff across Council departments including by Engineering and Consents staff.

Priority issues include perceived poor amenity and the inefficient use of land associated with infill housing, and the very limited ability of some locations to “absorb” more dense housing in terms of stormwater management, green-space provision and transportation. A summary list of priority issues is attached as Appendix 2.

Staff aim to address these issues in the process of achieving the study objectives.

## **4.2 Assessment of Richmond**

To understand the most appropriate locations for different types of residential development (in terms of density) staff are mapping the Richmond urban footprint against the following attributes:

- i) Topography and Hazards - Identify areas that might be constrained for, or locations that are better suited to, more intensive development;
- ii) Access and Road hierarchy - Show key transport routes and relative access to them, including key external linkages and public transport routes (e.g. Nelson);
- iii) Road and walkways proximity - Car and pedestrian distances from key amenities (e.g. commercial centre, schools, etc) helps to define locations with good access to key services and facilities;
- iv) Amenities - Commercial and community amenities are places people need to go and be accessible to more intensively housed areas;
- v) Parks and reserves, and vegetation/trees - Green open space areas are nice to live near, and are a destination (access);
- vi) Development age - The age of buildings is relevant to building re-development and infill development likelihood, with older buildings more likely to be subject of re-development. Conversely, character homes and heritage buildings are generally not re-developed and may act as a “constraint” to infill/brownfields;
- vii) Size and coverage dimensions - Land parcel size affects physical opportunities for development;
- viii) Real-estate value - Provides an indication of in-fill and/or re-development potential, based on the relationship between land value and capital value (i.e. high land value and low building value increases the likelihood of redevelopment and/or infill)
- ix) Servicing constraints - Identify locations that may be constrained by stormwater, water supply, wastewater or transportation network limitations

A series of maps will be produced, illustrating the above attributes as degrees of constraint to increasing density, and an intensification opportunities map.

### 4.3 Links With Other Richmond Projects

To ensure appropriate linkages between the Richmond Urban Density Study project and other Richmond-related development projects, staff have compiled a schedule of current projects (across Council teams) relating to development activities in Richmond. This is attached as Appendix 3.

## 5. NEXT STEPS

Progress towards completing the Richmond assessment work (4.2 above) is the first step. Once completed it can help to inform Council where it may be more or less appropriate to expand or intensify particularly residential development in Richmond and in other towns.

In parallel with this work and given Council is a signatory to the Urban Design Protocol, staff are working towards re-confirming what it is that defines “good urban design” in the context of the identified issues (see 4.1 and Appendix 2). In the form of objectives, these will guide staff and Council in determining where and how Richmond ought to expand and/or intensify.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee receive and note this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sonya Leusink-Sladen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonya Leusink-Sladen  
**Policy Planner**

Steve Markham  
**Manager Policy**

Rose Biss  
**Policy Planner**

Mary Honey  
**Policy Planner**

## APPENDICES

Project Brief (including consultation plan)  
Issues from staff workshop  
Schedule of Richmond projects

**Richmond Urban Density Planning Project - Stage I Project Brief**

**2 March 2010**

**Prepared by: Sonya Leusink-Sladen**

**1. Introduction**

This project concerns the future growth and development in the Richmond urban area. It aims to address density issues associated with greenfields, brownfields (re-development) and infill development.

The project has the purpose of providing a strategic overview, and a decision-making framework, for the coordination and alignment of planning projects associated with the future growth and intensification of the Richmond urban area.

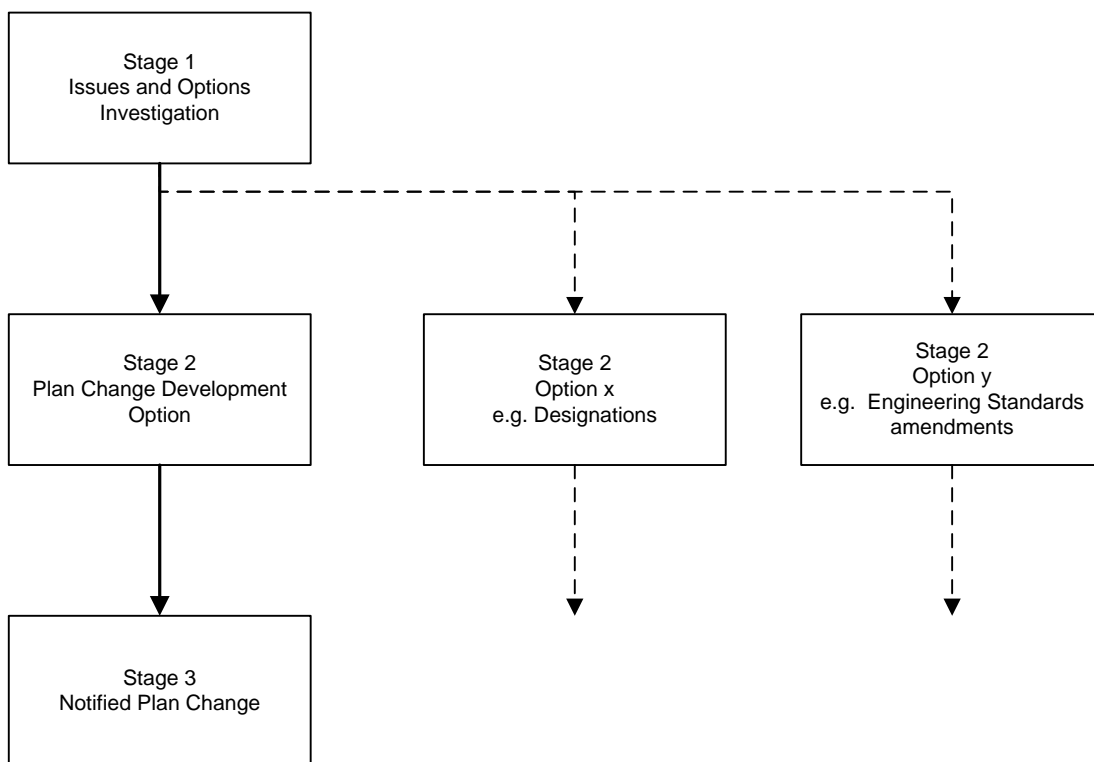
The need for a Richmond-wide planning study arises out of various interrelated urban planning projects, such as Richmond South, Richmond West and Richmond East, and the Central Area Intensification project. The scope of this project was discussed by policy staff concerned for the need for better coordination (see brainstorming session notes, Appendix 1)

A coordinating strategy or context for all projects affecting growth and development in Richmond can ensure alignment and efficiency of multiple project goals.

The Urban Density Planning Project will also be used to help coordinate and align policy planning objectives with other Council-wide activities, in particular the provision of key services, such as water supply, wastewater management, stormwater control, parks and reserves planning, and transportation.

Stage I of the project is concerned only with issues and options investigation. All issues and possibilities for addressing them will be comprehensively set out for the purpose of discussion with relevant Council staff, stakeholders, and the general community. More than one solution is likely to be necessary to effectively address issues. The key goal therefore of Stage I will be to identify those and set out a strategy for coordinating their achievement (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Basic Project Process Outline



Stage II will commence if/when a TRMP Plan Change is deemed necessary, most likely in combination with a number of Council-wide options.

## 2. Background

In 2003 Council undertook a study examining growth options for the Richmond area, the “Richmond Development Study - Issues and Options for Growth”. The study identified and assessed options for residential and industrial growth in Richmond for the next 20 years.

In the year following the community feedback on the RDS, the Council made a number of “in principle” decisions supporting a combination of urban containment and defined peripheral expansion for Richmond over at least a 20-year horizon, namely:

- Defined southwards expansion of Richmond, between State Highway 6 north of Hope, and Hill Street to create a high amenity residential environment.
- Residential and business intensification of central Richmond
- Defined residential intensification in suitable locations in Richmond East, including land south of Champion road and east of Hill Street.
- Future urban expansion in the Lower Queen Street area.

- Support for defined northward residential expansion towards Stoke in Nelson City, north of Champion Road.

Since then a number of policy projects have commenced based on the study findings, looking into the future growth and development in specific locations, namely Richmond South, Richmond West and Richmond East. In addition, urban intensification matters are being addressed in the Central Area Intensification project.

The need for some sort of strategic context, within which these projects might sit, was identified as a way of ensuring that project goals were aligned and efficiently achieved, and services provision appropriately and effectively prioritised.

In addition to strategic context for coordinating multiple projects, closer investigation into methods for achieving that growth and development in a manner consistent with good urban design principles, was also identified as a project need.

### 3. Project Purpose and Objectives

#### Purpose

To provide strategic overview, and a decision-making framework, for guiding the intensification of residential development and growth of the Richmond urban area.

#### Objectives

1. A consultation plan to coordinate all communications with stakeholders - internal and external to Council (including collaborations with Nelson City Council) - in an efficient manner is developed and implemented across all objectives.
2. The existing natural and human (built) landscape for the current Richmond urban footprint has been characterised;
3. Identified issues including servicing, real or perceived, associated with the following matters have been clearly articulated:
  - a. the current pattern of urban development in the Richmond urban area;
  - b. likely development trends based on predictions of changing demand; and,
  - c. development continuing to occur within existing development frameworks (current policy);
4. “Good urban design” principles have been clearly articulated:
  - a. under key development scenarios (e.g. greenfields development, infill development and brownfields intensification); and,
  - b. across key service and urban design outcome areas (e.g. transportation, utilities, amenity, privacy, functionality etc);
5. Using the findings from Objectives 2 and 4, agreement and/or compromise across Council and the Community regarding appropriate Richmond-specific urban design objectives has been reached;

6. The range of options, including the status quo, for addressing issues (Objective 2) and achieving urban design objectives (Objective 4 and 5), has been determined, and preferred option(s) have been identified.
7. A spatial “umbrella plan” for residential development in Richmond, including opportunities for intensification, has been drafted based on objectives above and consideration of a range of alternative spatial options.
8. Existing projects and Council activities relating to the growth, development and intensification of the Richmond urban footprint have been effectively coordinated to achieve efficiency in the delivery of outcomes. This includes infrastructure driven staging of development.
9. Projects, timeframes and action items necessary to pursue preferred options (Objective 6) in an efficient and coordinated manner have been clearly identified.

#### **4. Tasks**

- i) Draft a consultation plan, setting out groups and individuals to be communicated with, reasons for and timing of their involvement, and means of engagement. Apply as appropriate to process necessary to achieve tasks below (Objective 1).
- ii) Produce mapped representations of the Richmond Urban footprint, in terms of key character attributes such as (but not limited to); topography, natural hazards, vegetation, amenity values, development density, existing development age, key land use, locations of community amenities, distances to amenities, services etc (Objective 2)

*Look to other Councils’ work eg. Wellington, NCC*

- i) Produce a map identifying like-locations in the form of landuse character areas and/or neighbourhood communities within the Richmond Urban footprint (Objective 2)
- ii) Following Objective 3a, 3b and 3c, clearly articulate a comprehensive set of issue statements relating to Richmond urban development, addressing current issues and probable future issues based on changing demographics and continued development based on current policy and regulatory frameworks.
- iii) Articulate a set of general development principles for good urban design (such as stormwater management, transportation, non-vehicle access, amenity, public open space, private open space etc) as relevant to key development scenarios; “greenfields” development, “brownfields” re-development and “infill” housing.
- iv) Using information gathered in Task iii and the general urban development principles in Task v, articulate location-specific development objectives that are appropriate to Richmond

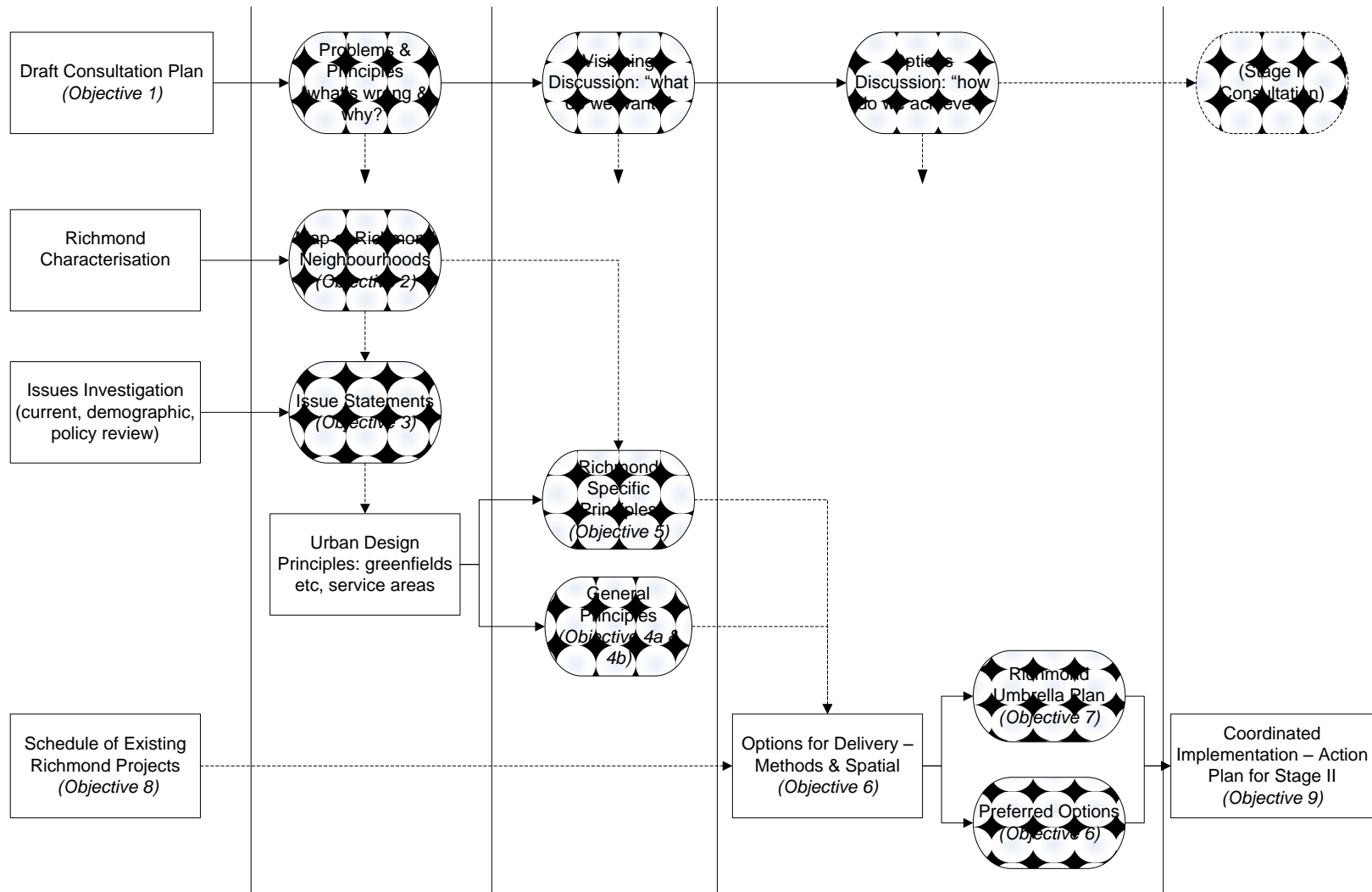


- v) Produce a schedule of existing projects from across all Departments in Council affecting/relating to the Richmond urban area in terms of; project goal/s, timeframes, resources, project outputs (deliverables), interrelationships between projects and Department/person responsibilities.
- vi) Identify the range of delivery options - such as Plan Changes, designations, education and advocacy, Design Guides, Engineering Standards changes, Capital Works projects, spatial plans (including structure plans) etc - available to Council to assist in achieving Richmond-specific development principles. This should include reference to existing projects identified in Task vii where relevant.
- vii) Develop spatial options, for development in Richmond, including intensification locations.
- viii) Undertake Section 32 Analysis of available options identified in Task viii and Task ix, to determine the most appropriate means of realising objectives.
- ix) identify preferred options for achieving general principles and Richmond-specific development objectives, and a preferred spatial “umbrella plan”, for development in Richmond, including intensification locations.
- x) Provide an action plan that breaks down the findings of the Section 32 analysis into projects and sub-projects, identifying key process relationships, timeframes, person/Department responsibilities, relationships to other existing projects, and action items necessary to ensure coordination of effort.

## **5. Process**

The intended process for achieving the above objectives is set out in Figure 2

Figure 2 - Richmond Urban Density Project – Stage I Process Outline



## 6. Resources

Staff resources are as follows:

**Project Team:** Steve Markham, Rose Biss, Mary Honey, Sonya Leusink-Sladen

**Project Coordinator:** Sonya Leusink-Sladen

**“CC” Team:** Phil Doole (Consents Coordinator), Paul Gibson (Subdivision), Dugald Ley (Engineering Standards), Jeff Cuthbertson (Engineering Utilities), Beryl Wilkes (Parks & Reserves), Gary Clark (Transportation)

The policy team budget will fund the staff time necessary to achieve the project outputs. The GL code is 0115.

### Staff Workshop - Richmond Density Issues

#### Summary of Priority Issues

- Infill - Current rules allow development to occur in a manner resulting in poor amenity and the inefficient use of land. We need better rules to encourage the right kind of intensive development.
- Carparking - Current requirements may be resulting in the inefficient use of land - standards should be revisited in relation to higher density development
- Public transport - relationship is important to reduced reliance on private car
- Roading - revisit of road corridor functions. With higher density development, road corridors could become higher amenity access corridors, "green-field" and made into multi-use spaces
- Cycle and pedestrian linkages are important with reduced reliance on the car
- Discharges - stormwater limitation will greatly affect where high density development can occur without significant downstream consequences
- Sea level rise - locations for more intensive development should take into account sea level rise issues
- Rules - subdivision and land-use relationship to buildings and amenity; "old" land-use rules; BA definitions; lot size maximum may be necessary to encourage more dense development? Urban land disturbance is not adequately addressed in current rules; site coverage rule needs to be revisited