The Renaissance of Inner City Living and its Implications for Infrastructure:
A Wellington Case Study

Dr Felicity Powell and Dr Abigail Harding
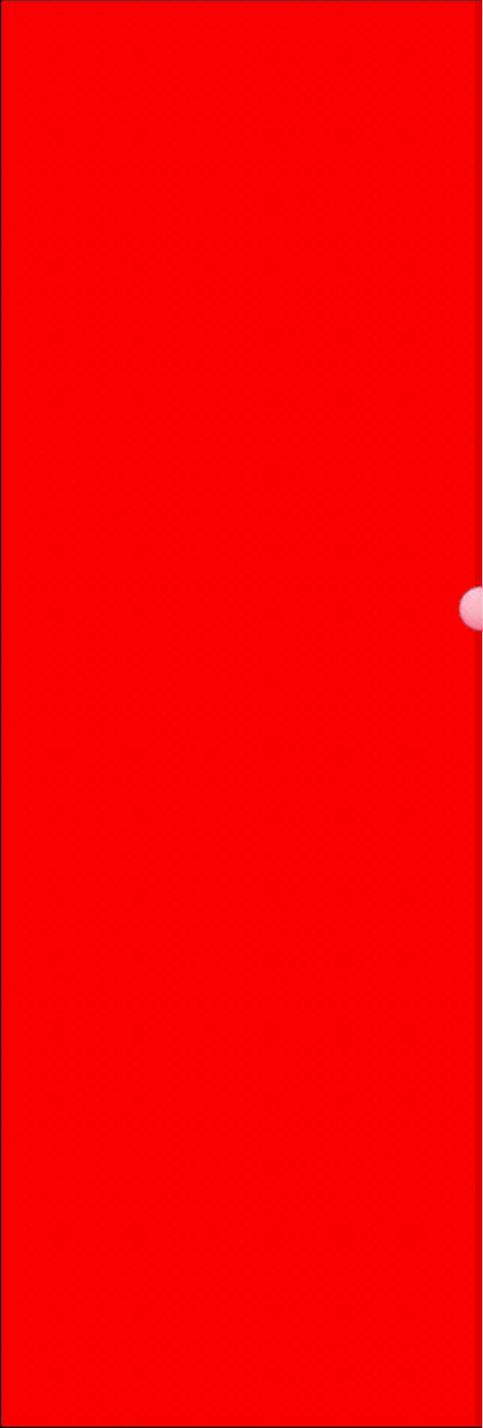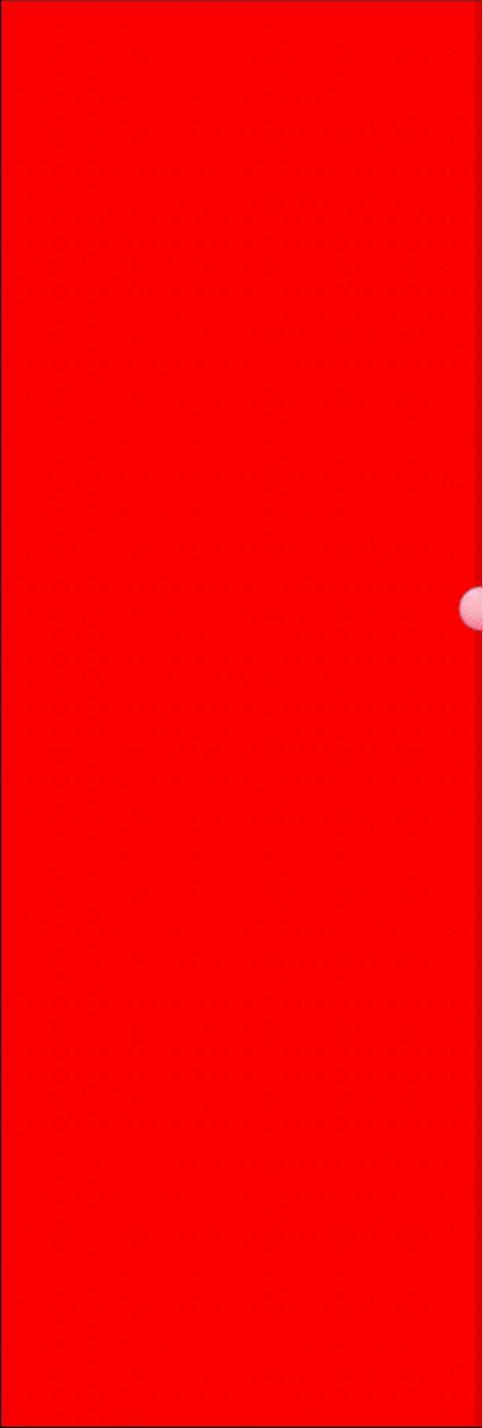Opus Central Laboratories

OPUS

Overview of Presentation

- Post-industrial land use and the resurgence of inner city living
- Historical overview of inner Wellington
- Quantifying changes in the inner city (1994-2009)
- Implications of changes for infrastructure
- Conclusions

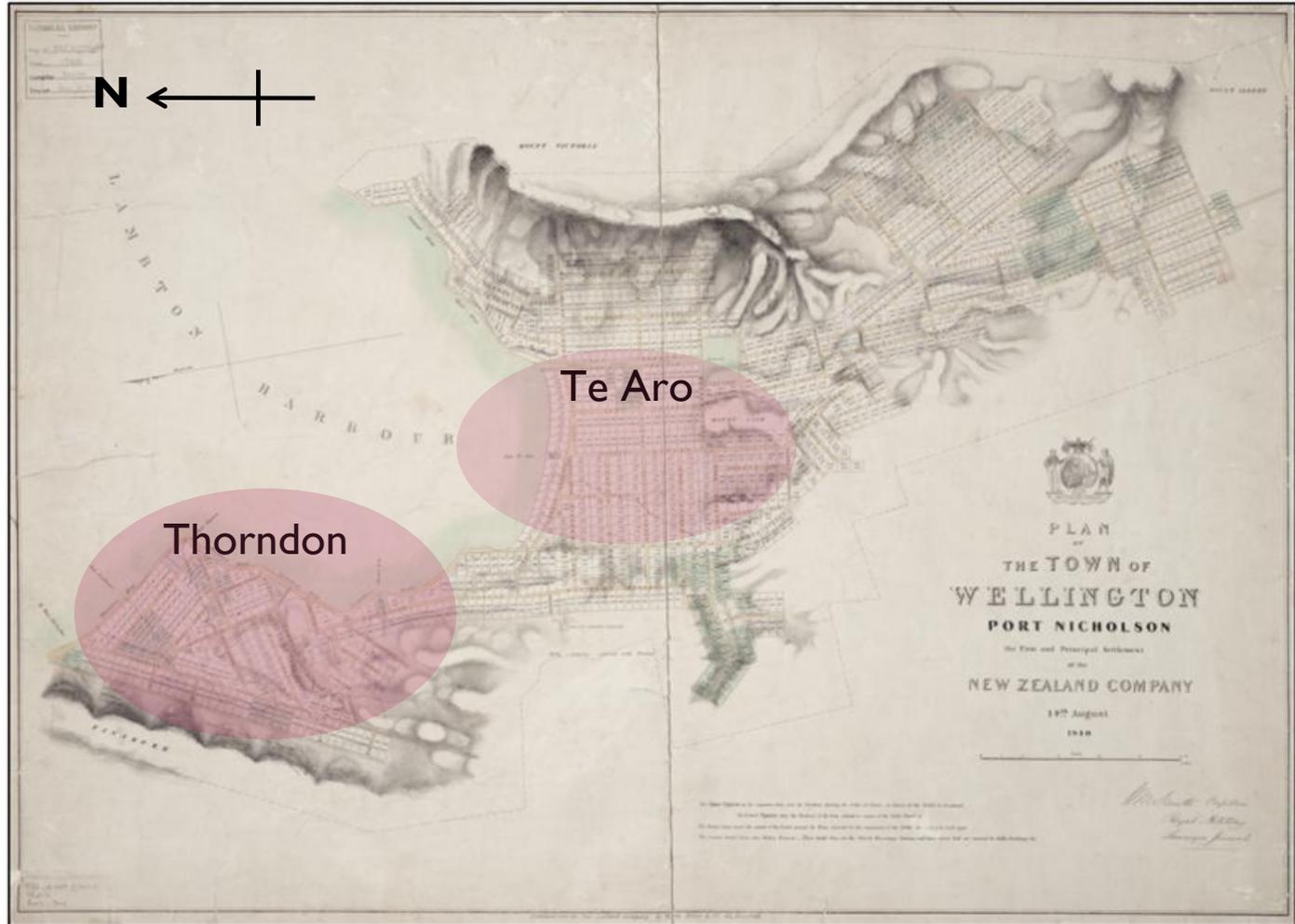# POST-INDUSTRIAL LAND USE AND THE RESURGENCE OF INNER CITY LIVING

Industrial and post-industrial cities

- Industrialisation led land use changes in cities during C19th and early C20th
- Post-industrial changes impacted on built environment
- Last 20-30 years people have returned to inner cities
- At same time gentrification evolving to include new-build developments
- All the above are evident in Wellington

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF INNER WELLINGTON

Early European settlement

N ←—

Te Aro

Thorndon

PLAN
OF
THE TOWN OF
WELLINGTON
PORT NICHOLSON
the Town and Principal Settlement
of the
NEW ZEALAND COMPANY
1ST August
1840

Thorndon: Seat of government

Thorndon: Home to city's elite

Te Aro: Commercial focus

Te Aro: Early intensification

Thorndon: 'Government centre'

Thorndon: Urban motorway and gentrification

Dominion Post Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ (EP/1969/3580/33)

Te Aro: Intensification continues

Te Aro: Industrial centre

1980s property boom

Inner city living in the 1990s
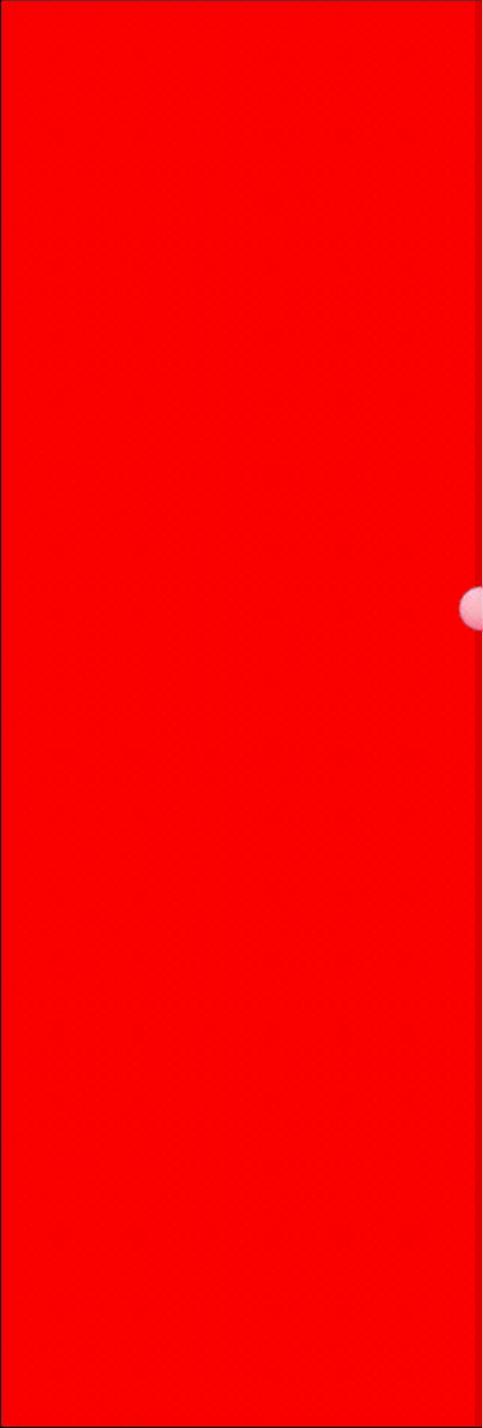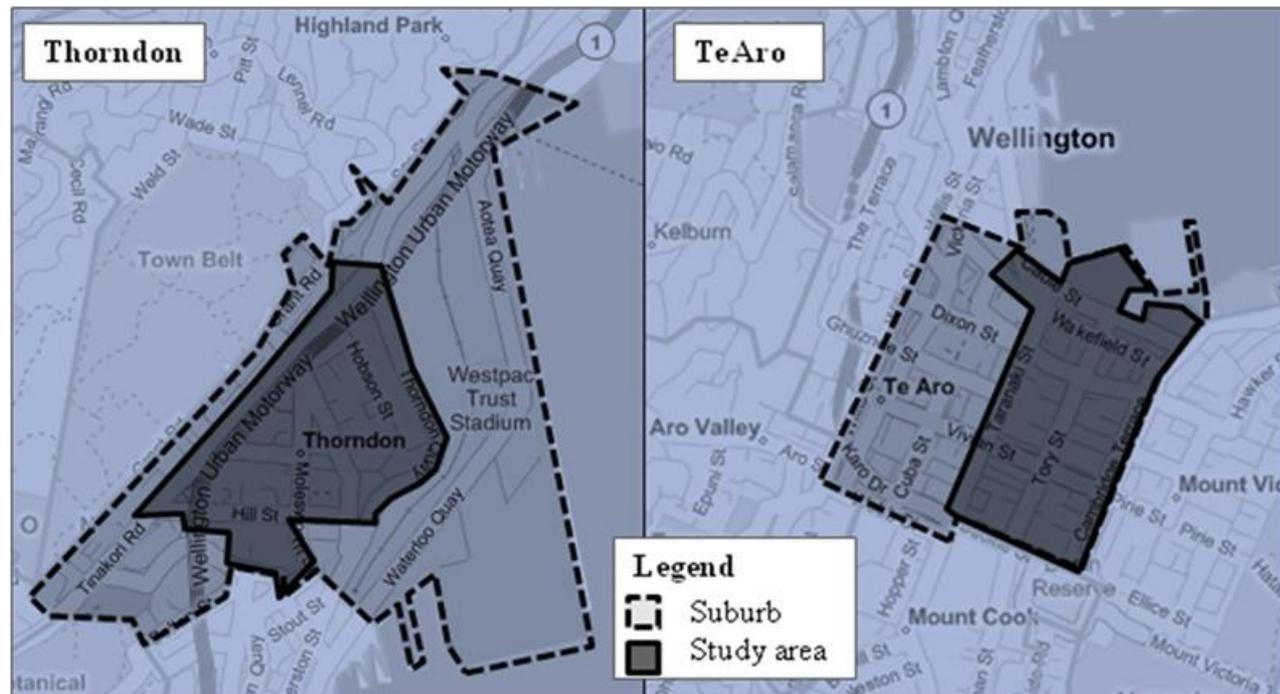
Thorndon in 2010

Te Aro in 2010

# QUANTIFYING RECENT CHANGES IN USAGE IN THORNDON AND TE ARO

Locations

- 28 conjoined meshblocks in Thorndon
- 25 meshblocks in Te Aro

Data

- Annual property ratings data (1994-2009)
- Properties broadly classified by type:
    I. Commercial
    II. Industrial
    III. Residential
    IV. Other
- At meshblock level, data includes:
    I. Number of properties
    II. Land area occupied by property type
    III. Building area occupied by property type

Changes in use of buildings
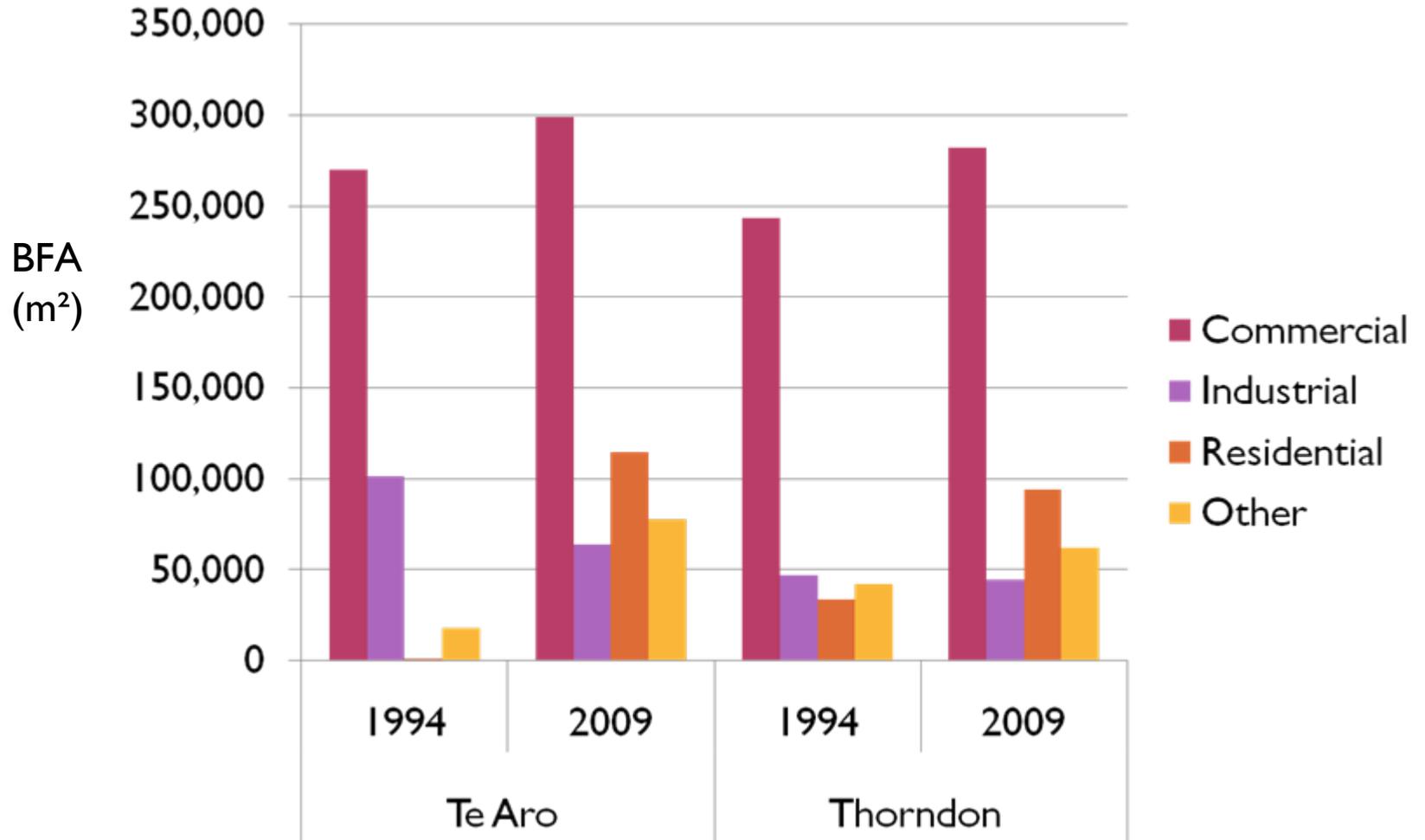
Residential usage

	Te Aro		Thorndon	
	1994	2009	1994	2009
Number of residences	5	1223	234	894
Building floor area (m²)	830	114,387	33,570	94,042
Land area (m²)	368	2,656	38,175	41,928

Commercial usage

	Te Aro		Thorndon	
	1994	2009	1994	2009
Number *(excluding car parks)*	146 *(144)*	774 *(263)*	78 *(74)*	287 *(117)*
Building floor area (m²)	269,897	299,316	243,610	281,849
Land area (m²)	135,140	163,650	124,080	134,360

Industrial usage

	Te Aro		Thorndon	
	1994	2009	1994	2009
Number	141	106	21	19
Building floor area (m²)	101,210	63,743	46,580	44,200
Land area (m²)	83,306	58,566	26,389	22,912

Summary of results

- More residences with new build mainly medium/high density housing
- Industry (esp. warehouses) vacating inner city
- In Te Aro residential is now second highest BFA after commercial
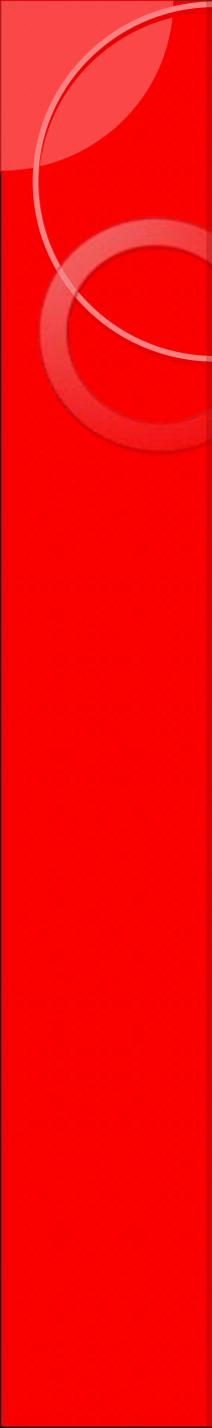- Office BFA in Thorndon up by 1/3; while in Te Aro down by 1/4
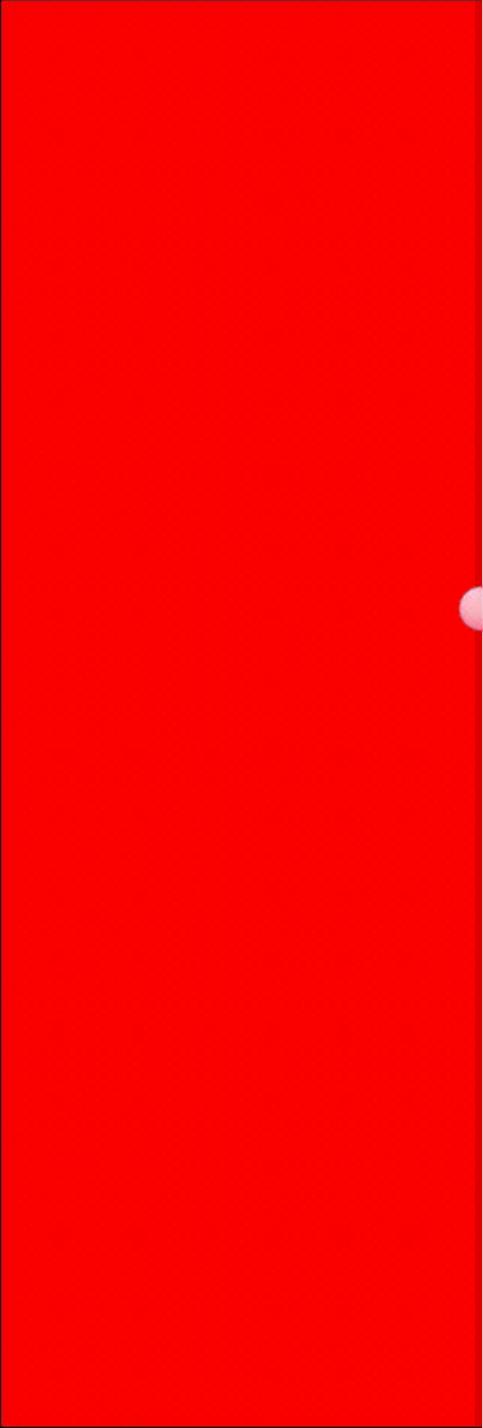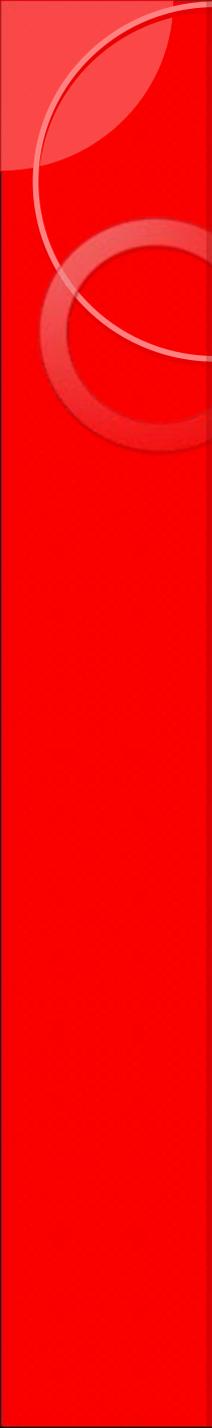
IMPLICATIONS FOR INNER CITY INFRASTRUCTURE
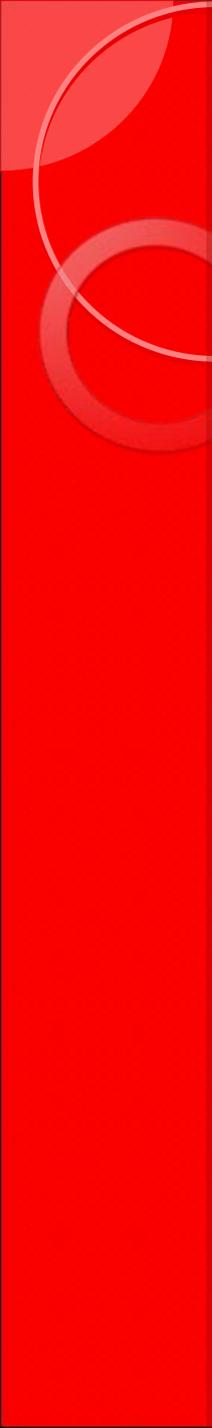
Higher density living: what does this mean for infrastructure providers?
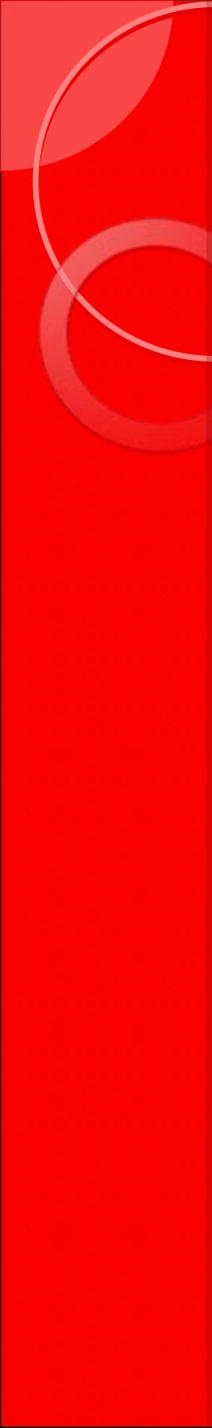
- Utilities infrastructure

Higher density living: what does this mean for infrastructure providers?

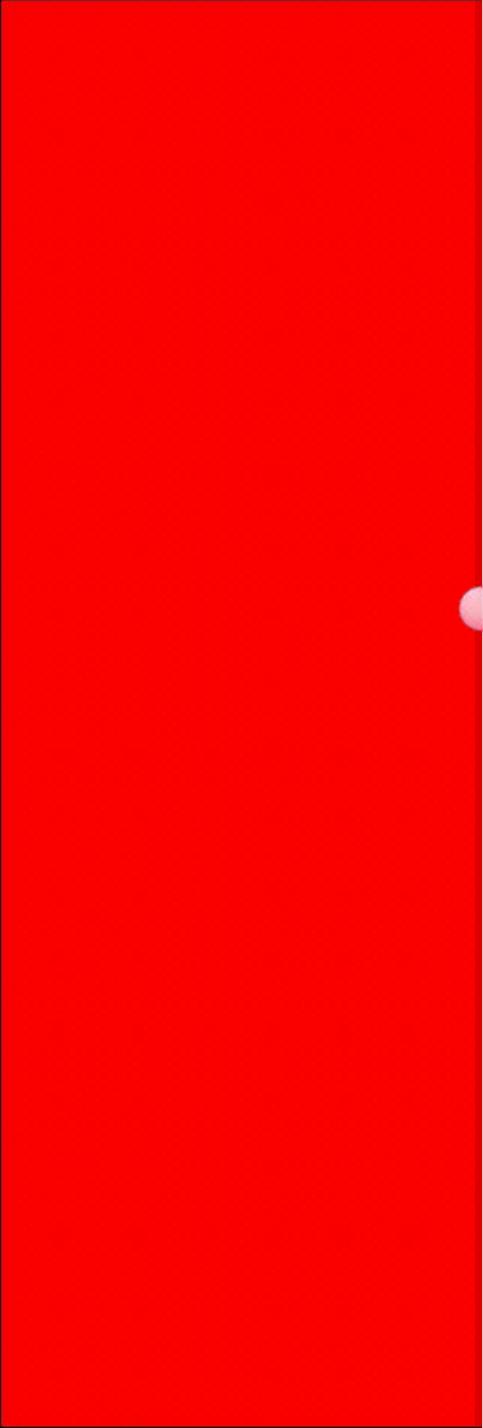- Utilities infrastructure
- Neighbourhood quality

Higher density living: what does this mean for infrastructure providers?

- Utilities infrastructure
- Neighbourhood quality
- Social diversity

Higher density living: what does this mean for infrastructure providers?

- Utilities infrastructure
- Neighbourhood quality
- Social diversity
- Transport

RENAISSANCE OF INNER CITY LIVING: FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Wellington: A city in transformation

- Similar to other world cities
- Changes due to a range of state, economic and social processes:
  - Local and central government policies & priorities
  - Commercial and property interests
  - People's preferences
  - Social trends (including gentrification)
- Changes are not uniform
- Reflect early development decisions and distinctive history of each place

Why are changes important?

- Significant & non-uniform changes can occur quickly
- Further swift transformations possible
- Changes to fuel prices/availability may stimulate these processes
- Leading to greater demand for inner city living and higher density housing
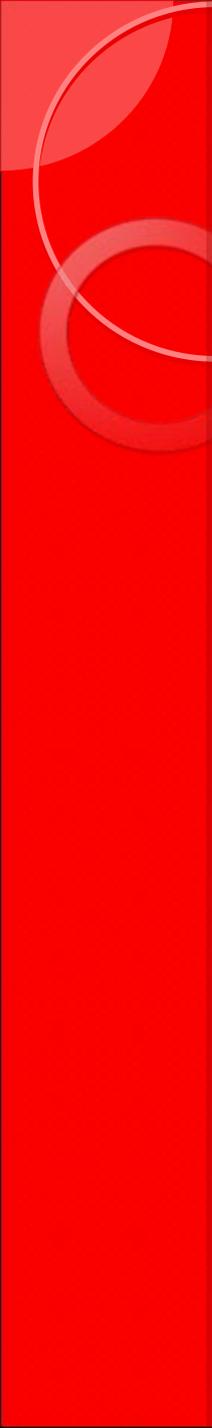
So…?

Infrastructure providers will need to:

- accurately predict changes
- act promptly