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Cross partisan support needed to bring New Zealand's urban planning into this century

This afternoon's release of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) is a step in the right direction, however, it will not solve our housing crisis overnight, says Property Council New Zealand chief executive Leonie Freeman.

The Property Council, which represents over 600 member companies who have a collective \$50 billion investment in New Zealand property, are calling on politicians to work together, allowing proposed changes to enable development and rekindle the economy.

The NPS provides a long-term planning framework for Councils to ensure we create well planned and functioning cities. It is hoped to reduce fragmentation and ensure we have enough amenities such as housing, schools, hospitals, business areas to meet the needs of communities and cities in New Zealand. The Councils are now tasked to develop these plans over the next few years.

The NPS-UD was released by Minister Phil Twyford today, with several notable changes from the previous draft. The most significant include:

- Tier 1 council* plans are to enable building heights of at least six storeys in areas of high demand or areas that are a walkable distance from existing or planned public transport (noting there are a list of exceptions specified such as heritage, open spaces and many other circumstances).
- The abolishment of car parking requirements for developers (lending towards a more market-driven approach).
- Tier 1 and 2 councils** will be required to work collaboratively to produce a 'Future Development Strategy' which sets out a long-term vision for accommodating urban growth.

This is welcome news for the property industry, says Freeman, as the NPS-UD directs councils to encourage intensification and enable development that, in time, could ease the housing shortage and unaffordability issues.

"Good quality planning takes time," says Freeman. "With the first Future Development Strategies to be developed by 2024 we can't afford to continually move the goal posts for local authorities, planners and developers.

"If the Government is serious about building our way out of crisis and ensuring New Zealander's a future of well-planned, fit-for-purpose infrastructure, then the politicians will need to come together and focus on what is best for our communities and cities. Such collaboration will allow the sector to move beyond the never-ending cycle of sole planning stages and into the implementation and delivery of developments that shape cities and enable communities to thrive.

"In practical terms, the NPS-UD will mean that although there may be an ability (from a planning perspective) to intensify cities, the developer would only do so if the numbers stacked up. The market will dictate this feasibility."

Property Council's submission on the draft NPS-UD called for Future Development Strategies to be compulsory for all medium and high growth councils (rather than solely high growth councils).

"We are pleased to see the Government has taken on board our advice, which will better allow for collaboration and alignment of regional planning across New Zealand", says Freeman. "Clear planning provides certainty for future development and builds confidence in the sector."

**Tier 1 councils are local authorities located in Auckland, Tauranga, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch.*

***Tier 2 councils are local authorities located in Whangārei, Rotorua, New Plymouth, Napier Hastings, Palmerston North, Nelson Tasman, Queenstown and Dunedin.*

[ENDS]

To read Property Council's full submission, [click here](#).

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

About Property Council New Zealand

Property Council New Zealand is the leading advocate for New Zealand's most significant industry - property.

A not-for-profit organisation, the Property Council connects more than 10,000 property professionals, championing the interests of over 600 member companies who have a collective \$50 billion investment in New Zealand property.

Our membership is broad and includes some of the largest commercial and residential property owners and developers in New Zealand. The property industry comes together at our 80+ Property Council events, which offer professional development, exceptional networking and access to industry-leading research.

Property Council acts as a collective voice, giving our members a seat at the table with policy makers, ensuring they make informed decisions that benefit our industry whilst enabling a strong economy and thriving communities.

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