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FAAB Small Homes – Matters of Size

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Functional, Accessible, Affordable, Buildable Small Homes

Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities National Science Challenge

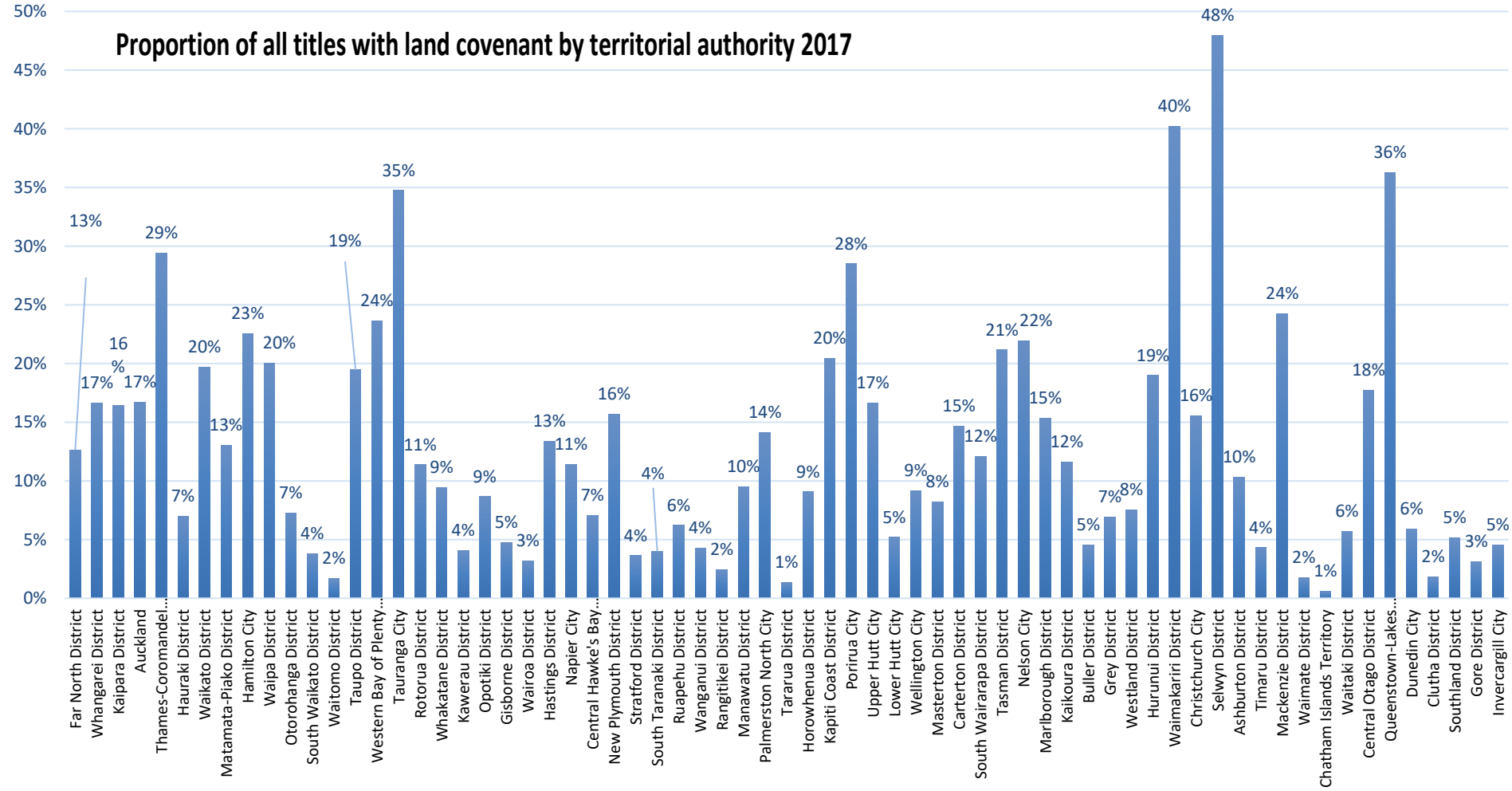
National Science Challenges

BUILDING BETTER HOMES, TOWNS AND CITIES

Ko Ngā wā Kainga hei whakamāhorahora

Dwelling size in Aotearoa is used to:

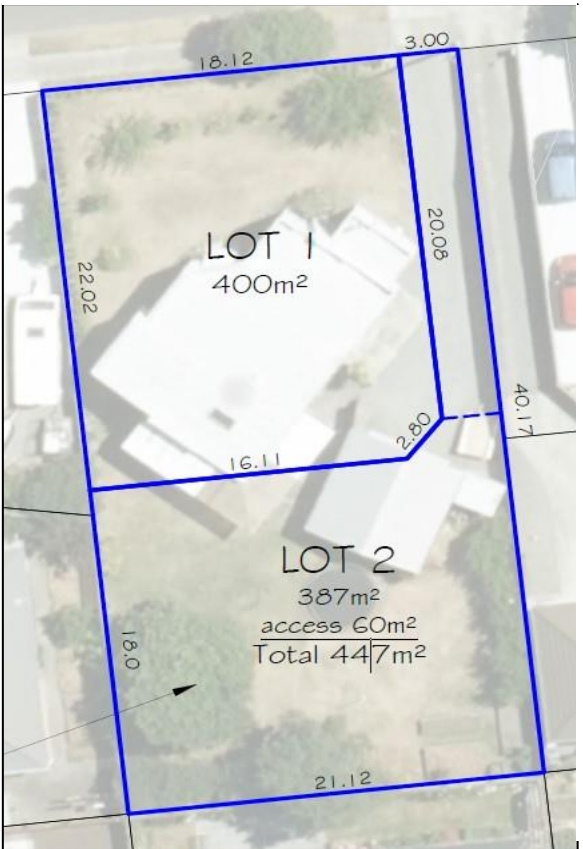
- Represent success – Promotion of Big Mac - Mansions
- Penalise the ‘undeserving’



‘Big is Better’ is:

- Evident in planning practise even when not fundamental to a district plan
- Adds unnecessary risk and cost to developing small detached homes

Proposed Residential Lot Subdivision



District plan requires - a minimum net area of 400m^2.

Proposed sub-division:

- one district plan compliant site of 400m^2
- a rear site of net area of 387m^2
- 13m^2 less than that required in the zone despite the gross measure of the lot being 447m^2.

Council chose a limited notification process because:

"The proposal will actually result in double the number of dwellings that could be erected on the site as a permitted activity. This may potentially increase the adverse effects to the amenity values of this directly adjacent property due to: increased shading from two dwellings instead of the permitted one increase noise, and odour (eg smoke from chimneys or BBQs), from two occupant families instead of the permitted one. increased [sic] impact on privacy, especially as both dwellings will be two storey [sic]*, and the upper storey could potentially contain a living area…"*

Evidence of Claimed Adverse Effects and Extending the Rules

No rule for the zone in the district plan on:

- The number of BBQs any dwelling can use or use density
- No restriction on the number of chimney flues per dwelling, although there are restrictions applied to different heating appliances and emissions.

Development impacts of a large permitted dwelling ignored

- Permitted dwelling could be footprint of 381m^2 with a floor size of around 510m^2 over two storeys equivalent of 4.25 3- bedroom houses
- Proposed dwellings combined 344m^2 and equivalent of 2.86 3-bedroom houses

Proposed dwellings 67% of potential residential activity – people movement and noise – of a dwelling that would be accepted under the zone rules as a permitted activity.

Evidence of Claimed Adverse Effects

No privacy impacts

Shading Impacts – sun analysis modelling showed shading by the two proposed dwellings, in excess of that delivered by the permitted activity baseline dwelling, was small in extent, and infrequent in occurrence.

So what is really going on here?

- Lack of expertise enabled by the problem of moral hazard
- Attachment to a model of residential development which is both:
  - suburban in relation to lot size
  - directed to promoting buildings of large size within a single-storey typology

It is not just designers and builders that present a barrier to FAAB Small homes

- Burdening small dwellings and infill subdivisions with processes disproportionate to likely impacts compromises the possibility that small homes may deliver more homes at less cost.
- Access to land is already a significant bar to those wishing to build affordable housing. Uncertainties increase the risks and costs of builds.
- Small builds inevitably have tight margins. Affordable small builds have even tighter margins.
- Meeting the needs of people needing small, affordable dwellings is not facilitated where practices extend the consideration of effects on dimensions which already comply with district planning rules and overstate possible effects.