

## **Report 99.436**

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Report to the Regional Land Transport Strategy Hearings Sub-Committee  
By Tony Brennand, Manager Transport Policy

### **Comments and Recommendations on Major Issues Arising from the RLTS Submission Process**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to propose suggestions to deal with the major issues arising from the Regional Land Transport Strategy Submission Process.

#### **2. Background**

This paper proposes to comment on the major issues parked by the Sub-committee for further discussion. The major issues have been identified by the Hearings Sub-committee as follows:

- (i) Wellington South Eastern Corridor Plan
- (ii) Paraparaumu Station and surrounds
- (iii) A target for mode split
- (iv) The inclusion of projects in the strategy
- (v) Corridor Plans priorities
- (vi) Road pricing and funding issues
- (vii) SH1 capacity improvements versus Transmission Gully

#### **3. Comment**

##### **3.1 Wellington South Eastern Corridor Plan**

The Regional Land Transport Strategy has identified needs in the Wellington South Eastern Corridor.

Investigation of options to meet the needs identified in the Wellington South Eastern Corridor is required. It is recommended that the strategy recognise this need, the matter is referred to Wellington City Council and Transit New Zealand and officers work with them so that the next review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy can accommodate the resulting corridor plan.

### 3.2 Paraparaumu Station and Surrounds

A number of submitters raised concerns about the environs surrounding Paraparaumu Station and the possibility of developing a fully integrated transport centre at the site.

The appearance of the environs is a matter for the local District Council and there are District Plan provisions that can deal with this issue.

The Kapiti rail package proposal has identified an opportunity to develop a purpose built transport centre north of Paraparaumu. The options at Paraparaumu are limited. It is recommended that no change be made to the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

### 3.3 A Target for Mode Split

Mode split is identified as a performance indicator, but not a target in the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

The Regional Land Transport Committee set objectives for the Regional Land Transport Strategy in the areas of:

- *Accessibility and economic development*
- *Safety*
- *Affordability*
- *Economic efficiency*
- *Sustainability*

Targets are an output of this process rather than an input. It was within the Committee's power to have set up mode split as an objective but the Committee chose not to. To insert mode split as a target now would require the complete reworking of the technical analysis.

It is recommended that no action be taken.

### 3.4 The Inclusion of Projects in the Strategy

... Section 175 (2) of the Land Transport Act 1998 sets out the requirements of a Regional Land Transport Strategy and is shown in **Attachment A**. Subsection (d) requires the strategy to "state the best means of achieving the objectives referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c)."

Nowhere in subsection (d) or any other subsection of Section 175 (2) of the Act are there any limitations placed on how the best means of achieving the objectives of the strategy are stated. It could be argued that a series of projects and measures give a useful picture to how the objectives are achieved.

The key issue here is the question of "network balance". The technical analysis has shown very clearly that in the Wellington Region there is a strong interdependence between projects on one part of the road network and other parts of the road network, as well as an interdependence with the passenger transport network. This is primarily a question of the provision of appropriate capacity.

This means that if one agency acts to provide a different level of capacity from that intended by the Regional Land Transport Strategy, the total network balance is destroyed and the objectives of the strategy are not achieved.

The only way that the objectives of the strategy can be re-addressed is for a corresponding level of capacity to be provided at other parts of the road and passenger transport network which would lead to a different level of investment from that intended in the strategy.

In this way the implementation of the strategy is destroyed. The other consequence is that such an action by an agency imposes a commitment, and a cost, on other agencies if network balance is to be maintained. Such costs may not be fundable under current funding criteria.

As the issue is the provision of capacity in different parts of the network, alternative projects that achieve equivalent levels of capacity do not create a problem. It is important that sufficient flexibility be built into the strategy to enable alternative projects of approximately the same level of capacity be permitted.

It is recommended that the corridor plans be qualified to allow alternative projects of similar capacity to be included as alternatives. This recommendation has been discussed with representatives of Transit New Zealand, Transfund New Zealand and Ministry of Transport.

### 3.5 Corridor Plan Priorities

The draft Regional Land Transport Strategy has identified a series of corridor plans. However, the timing of the various components of the corridor plans has not been specified, except through a broad grouping of up to 2004 and beyond 2004.

The relative timing of the various components of a given corridor plan is critical in some corridors but not critical in others. To specify timing requirements further investigation may be required.

It is recommended that relative timing issues be specified in the corridor plans where necessary.

### 3.6 Road Pricing and Funding Issues

A generally positive commitment to road pricing in the Wellington Region subject to a more definitive proposal was identified through the submission process. Such a proposal would need to have the wider impacts of road pricing carefully assessed. Further investigations of road pricing and funding issues are proposed for the 1999/2000 financial year which is designed to address the issues raised.

... The draft Regional Land Transport Strategy's statement on road pricing is provided in **Attachment B**. The proposed study will re-examine this issue and identify a more definitive proposal. No change to the Regional Land Transport Strategy is recommended except to acknowledge the potential benefits of a higher level of road pricing to satisfy the Ministry of Transport's request.

### 3.7 SH1 Capacity Improvements versus Transmission Gully

Analysis has shown clearly that building both projects is not viable. A decision on proceeding with one of the options is required which will effectively lock out the other option for a long time. In the case of Transmission Gully, if the proposed State Highway 1 capacity improvements north of Paremata roundabout are built first then Transmission Gully will not be fundable under current criteria till some time well past

the 20 year planning horizon used in the Regional Land Transport Strategy development process.

Both alternatives are not ready to proceed with and require further work and a hearing before the Environment Court before either could proceed. There is a commitment jointly shared by the Wellington Regional Council and Transit New Zealand to complete the Willingness to Pay survey for the early construction of Transmission Gully before a final decision is made.

The technical analysis has clearly shown there is a strong interdependence between projects in the network. It is not possible to simply substitute one project for another, where the two projects have a completely different level of capacity provision. Such a move will change the package and timing of other projects that need to be implemented if the network is to remain in balance. This is effectively a complete change in direction of the strategy or in other words requires a complete strategy review.

The options to address this issue in the Regional Land Transport Strategy are:

- (i) Leave the draft Regional Land Transport Strategy as it is and make appropriate adjustments to the strategy at its next review in approximately 2 years time. This has the potential to delay development of the corridor as a clearer understanding of which of the projects is best pursued is likely within a year.
- (ii) Leave the draft Regional Land Transport Strategy as it is and undertake a review of the strategy as soon as definitive information is available to make a decision between the two alternatives. This would involve a further round of public consultation which in itself could produce some delay.
- (iii) Indicate a preference for the Transmission Gully project and signal the development of a comprehensive multi modal corridor plan. This plan will examine the needs of the corridor from Ngauranga to Paraparaumu and identify the components and implementation timing of the optimum package to address those needs. These needs will include capacity, safety, efficiency and community impact. Such an analysis will integrate road and rail. It will consider the economics of the short term needs of Paremata and longer term needs on the Coastal section and at Paekakariki in the evaluation to determine the optimum package. This is to be a requirement before any road project is to proceed.

The third option is recommended. This option has been discussed with representatives of Transit New Zealand, Transfund New Zealand and Porirua City Council. It provides a process that will enable the best combination of measures to be identified and implemented in a planned manner.

#### 4. **Recommendation**

- (1) *That the Regional Land Transport Strategy recognise the need for a South Eastern Corridor Plan to be developed and this be referred to Wellington City Council and Transit New Zealand for inclusion in the next Regional Land Transport Strategy with respect to the Inner City Bypass and the South Eastern Corridor.*

- (2) *That no change be made to the Regional Land Transport Strategy with respect to the Paraparaumu Station environs.*
- (3) *That no change be made to the Regional Land Transport Strategy with respect to setting a target for mode split in the Regional Land Transport Strategy.*
- (4) *That the 1999-2004 corridor plans be retained but the projects qualified to permit alternative projects that provide approximately the same level of capacity.*
- (5) *It is recommended that relative timing issues be specified in the corridor plans where necessary.*
- (6) *Further work be undertaken to develop a more definitive proposal for road pricing in the Wellington Region and that this be reflected in the Regional Land Transport Strategy.*
- (7) *That the strategy indicate a preference for Transmission Gully and signal the requirement to complete a Western Corridor Implementation Plan that includes both road and rail, which will determine the optimum package before any specific road project in the corridor can proceed.*

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**Attachment (2)**

## **Section 175 (2) of the Land Transport Act 1998**

Every Regional Land Transport Strategy prepared under this section must:

- (a) Identify the future land transport needs of the region concerned; and
- (b) Identify the most desirable means of responding to such needs in a safe and cost effective manner, having regard to the effect the transport system is likely to have on the environment; and
- (c) Identify an appropriate role for each land transport mode in the region, including freight traffic, public passenger transport, cycling and pedestrian traffic; and
- (d) State the best means of achieving the objectives referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c); and
- (e) Include any Regional Passenger Transport Plan (within the meaning of section 47 of the Transport Services Licensing Act 1989) that has been prepared by the Regional Council that has prepared the strategy.

## **Road Pricing**

There is a case for introducing road pricing in the Wellington Region. Analysis has shown that where road pricing is used to fund selected new infrastructure and services, there is a gain in total network performance, economic efficiency and to the economy. Road pricing can be useful in managing some of the adverse impacts of new infrastructure such as induced traffic, balancing network flows and environmental impacts. At this stage road pricing set at a level to change behaviour and reduce demand on total network is not advocated. Analysis has shown that in Wellington such an approach is not required and is likely to lead to a net loss to the local economy. Careful consideration of the mechanism of road pricing is now required.