



Report 03.606
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Committee Regional Land Transport
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Wairarapa Corridor Plan

1. Purpose

To provide the Committee an analysis of the submissions received in order to finalise the corridor plan.

2. Background

Submissions on the draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan closed on 20 September 2003. Prior to this time Cr Buchanan, Mayor Francis and Mr Brennand met with a number of key stakeholders with interests in transporting logs from the Wairarapa to Wellington. Strong support was articulated for the proposal to transport logs using a multi model process involving a transfer of logs from road to rail.

A formal meeting of key stakeholders was held on 20 August 2003 in Masterton to discuss the wider corridor plan. A public meeting was held on 8 September 2003 to discuss the wider corridor plan.

3. Comment

The draft corridor plan is provided in **attachment 1**.

3.1 Submissions received

Eight written submissions were received. Copies of these submissions are provided in **attachment 2**. At the various formal meetings a number of comments were received. In addition Mr W Creech contacted this office by telephone and made a number of comments on behalf of the Hill Road Committee.

3.2 Analysis of submissions

3.2.1 AA Wairarapa

This submission suggests that in the medium to longer term future a higher standard road will be required over the Rimutakas. The submission proposes that regional development funding and safety issues could be sufficient to fund such a road.

Comment

The construction of such a high standard road is likely to be very expensive and would exceed \$100 million. The current annual average daily traffic flow on the Rimutaka Hill Road is approximately 3900 vehicles per day. It is likely that if the short fall in road funds in this region is addressed in future years other projects would be of higher priority. Such a proposal would almost certainly not be an efficient expenditure of funds.

3.2.2 AA Wellington

This submission expresses support for the draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan and suggests that safety issues in the plan should be strengthened. This applies particularly to the Rimutaka section of the Hill Road.

3.2.3 Wellington Regional Council

This submission recommends minor changes to the words for continuous passenger rail service enhancements, proposes that a comprehensive review of bus services takes place and supports the transport of logs by rail as a means of providing security for keeping the Wairarapa line open.

3.2.4 AA Wairarapa

This raises the question as to whether the development of the corridor plan took place fully informed of Transit New Zealand's proposals. The submission proposes that further ribbon development in the towns between Masterton and Wellington be curbed in the interests of safety.

Comment

Transit New Zealand's highway proposals were fully understood at the time of developing the corridor plan. Matters related in ribbon development in the town's adjacent to the highway are a District Plan issue and should be referred to the local councils.

3.2.5 Upper Hutt City Council

The Upper Hutt City Council's submission provides support to proposals to upgrade SH2 between Wairarapa and Wellington, to improve Muldoon's Corner, to complete the 70 kph design strategy for the Hill Road, and supports proposals to protect rail infrastructure, wagons, facilities and freight proposals.

3.2.6 South Wairarapa District Council

This submission suggests the inclusion of some new proposals and the minor rewording of existing elements. Amongst the “Identified needs and issues” this submission proposes the inclusion of:

- Significant increase in traffic volumes due to an increase in rateable properties and argues that low population growth is not an indicator of traffic growth
- A need to reduce traffic noise within towns
- Provision of passing lanes between Greytown and inadequate passing opportunities on the Rimutaka Hill Road.

Comment

The reference to increase in traffic volumes due to an increase in rateable properties is appropriate. Low population growth is a factual statement and has little to do with traffic growth. Traffic can still continue to grow in situations of low population growth as in the case of the Hutt Corridor Plan. Low population growth is significant because it is an indicator of the performance of some key sectors of the local economy such as the service sector. Low population growth can also be an indicator of an area being less desirable to live in because of access problems. Traffic noise is an appropriate issue to identify. The issue of passing lane is more of a solution than an issue but it would be appropriate to include an issue as “lack of passing opportunities between Masterton and Kaitoke”.

The submission proposes that the following two projects be added for roading up to 2008:

- Reduce traffic noise in towns using appropriate surface materials and erecting “no air-brake signs”
- A specific reference to passing lanes between Featherston and Greytown and the Rimutaka Hill Road.

Comment

The traffic noise issue may be more of a local design issue and the methods specified may be overly restricted. The Committee, equally could decide that noise associated with traffic moving through local areas is a region wide issue and should be addressed in the Regional Land Transport Strategy. Passing lanes between Featherston and Greytown are addressed by the more general reference to passing lanes between Featherston and Masterton in the draft corridor plan. Transit New Zealand advise that additional passing lanes on the Rimutaka Hill would involve considerable expense.

The submission promotes the provision of disability transport to hospitals for passenger transport up to 2008. If this is included in the corridor plan then a matching issue or need is required.

The submission promotes the widening of bridges over the Ruamahanga and Tauherenikau Rivers on SH53. If these are to be included in the corridor plan then there is a need for a matching issue or need.

3.2.7 Go Wairarapa

This submission is generally supportive of the draft corridor plan. The submission questions whether population growth is a driver of traffic growth. It suggests that the regional irrigation scheme may influence traffic growth in the long term and suggests some consideration of linkages to the Hawkes Bay and Manawatu are required.

The submission proposes that the strategy for upgrading the Rimutaka Hill Road needs to be proactive in that designs, land purchase and consents be obtained in advance so that elements of the programme can proceed whenever funding becomes available. Investigation of heavy traffic bypasses of the townships on SH2 is proposed.

Comment

The issue of low population growth has been dealt with above. Linkages to Hawke's Bay and Manawatu are appropriate issues to raise but there does not appear to be any major issues with these linkages. Proposals to complete design, purchase land and obtain consents for projects well in advance of construction have merit. Heavy traffic bypasses of townships should be investigated.

3.2.8 Masterton District Council

The main issue raised by this submission is the provision of an eastern bypass of Masterton. This proposal appears appropriate.

3.2.9 Hill Road Committee

The three comments made on behalf of the Hill Road Committee are:

- A long term plan is required for the Hill Road with consents and designs approved well in advance so that projects are ready to go as soon as funding becomes available
- Consistent with the point above is that when fill is generated by a particular project then it can be deposited at an appropriate subsequent project site
- More certainty is required with the rail corridor so that this important asset is not lost.

Comment

All of these comments are appropriate.

3.2.10 Other comments from public meetings

The relevance of new stations at Timberlea and Cruickshank Road to the Wairarapa was questioned and a call for a review of internal passenger transport services of the area was made.

Comment

This would require an amendment to the “Identified need and issue” section.

3.3 Recommended changes to the Corridor Plan

From the submissions above it is recommended that the following changes are made to the corridor plan.

3.3.1 Amend the “Identified needs and issues” section to include:

- Increase in traffic volumes due to an increase in rateable properties
- Substandard bridge widths on SH2 and SH53
- The impact of heavy traffic on townships adjacent to SH2
- Inadequate passing opportunities on SH2 between Masterton and Kaitoke
- Passenger transport services internal to the Wairarapa do not meet the needs of the wider community and expand low population growth in the Wairarapa to make reference to the impact of the local economy and the ease of access in and out of the Wairarapa.

3.3.2 Projects to 2008 – Roading

Amend to include:

- Complete the long term design for a target 70kph standard strategy for the Rimutaka Hill Road, recognising that a lower standard will apply to some difficult terrain areas. Obtain consents and develop detailed designs so projects are ready to go should funding become available.
- Investigate the need for heavy traffic bypasses of the townships on SH2 from Masterton to Featherston.

3.3.3 Projects to 2008 – Public Transport

Amend to include:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of passenger transport services within the Wairarapa including the needs of specific groups within the area such as the disabled and the transport disadvantaged.

3.3.4 Projects for Beyond 2008 – Public Transport

Delete references to new stations at Timberlea and Cruickshank Road.

4. Communications

Details of the adopted corridor plan might be made available to relevant media.

5. Recommendation

*That the amended Corridor Plan provided in **attachment 3** be adopted.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Attachments:

1. Draft corridor plan
2. Copies of submissions
3. Amended corridor plan