



Report           04.265  
Date             5 May 2004  
File             TP/01/04/02

Committee       Regional Land Transport  
Author          Lesley McConnell Policy Advisor Access Planning

## Regional Land Transport Strategy Review

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the RLTS review process and to have them adopt in principle the vision and objectives for producing the draft RLTS.

### 2. Background

The RLTS is in the early stages of review and a process of preliminary technical analysis of regional transport issues has been ongoing during 2004. The Technical Working Group (TWG) met on 15 April 2004 to peer review the analysis and discuss the relationship with national and regional policy frameworks. The resultant findings form the basis of discussion in this paper. The following table further outlines the key dates for 2004.

18 May 2004	• RLTC adopt in principle of vision and objectives
May - July	• Policy analysis
	• Ongoing issue analysis
1 July 2004	• RLTC Policy review workshop
17 August 2004	• RLTC adopt in principle set of draft policies
August →	• Ongoing RLTS development/workstreams

This paper firstly outlines the key transport pressures for the region, and resultant impacts. Secondly, discusses how the region's issues can be integrated into the national and regional legislative frameworks.

### **3. Transport pressures**

#### **3.1 Population change**

On a whole the region experienced 5.8% growth between 1991 and 2001. Population growth to 2021 of 7.4% is projected<sup>1</sup>. When disaggregated by TAs, however, growth rates around the region are variable, with some areas forecast to decline.

Wellington and Kapiti Coast have experienced strong growth of 10.4% and 21.5% respectively between 1991–2001. These trends are projected to continue with 13.4% and 30.3% growth respectively between 2001 and 2021.

Hutt and Porirua cities have also experienced growth between 1991–2001 (0.6% and 1.8% respectively). Projections out to 2021 indicate continued growth in Porirua of 2.5%, however, a decline in Hutt City of -0.7%.

Wairarapa and Upper Hutt both show population decline of 1% and 1.4% respectively. Projections indicate ongoing decline of 7.2% and -3.9%.

The population distribution of the region is and will continue to be a significant transport demand determinant.

#### **3.2 Economic growth**

Between 1996 and 2003 the region experienced 23% economic growth. During the March 02–03 year, the region had 2.5% growth, which is equivalent to the New Zealand average. Indications show this level of growth will continue. The Wellington Regional Strategy terms of reference also signal the region's desire for ongoing and increasing economic and population growth. Growth will continue to drive demand for movement of people and freight.

#### **3.3 Travel demand**

All key travel indicators show an increasing trend in travel demand, illustrating the need for continual maintenance and improvement of transport networks.

Modelling of vehicle kilometres travelled indicates a 36% increase between 1990 and 2000, with ongoing projected increases of 12% to 2010 and 26% to 2020 from 2000.

Similarly, vehicle ownership has increased by 30% between 1990 and 2000, and is projected to continue with 33% growth projected to 2020 from 2000.

Public transport patronage continues to show strong and steady growth. Between 2001 and 2002, bus patronage increased 5.7%, train 1.82% and ferry 8.8%.

---

<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand

Trips made by cycle and pedestrians are increasing in the region as a whole, however this is driven by increases in Wellington City alone. All other TA areas are decreasing.

## **4. Transport issues**

The impact of the above transport pressures can be considered by their effects on generally accepted transport aims.

### **4.1 Mobility**

Increased travel demand and kilometres travelled indicates an increase in mobility for the region. Vehicle ownership is increasing, access to walking and cycling is continually improving, as is access to public transport services. Usage of active transport modes has public health benefits, and the positive trends experienced in Wellington City are to be encouraged. However, increased car mobility has negative impacts on the transport system as a whole (accessibility) and on the environment, especially if peak period congestion increases.

### **4.2 Accessibility**

A long standing and critical issue for the region is the state of passenger rail rolling stock. First delivered in 1949, it is well overdue for replacement. Significant investment is urgently required to upgrade the rolling stock and to maintain increasing patronage.

Congestion caused by greater motor vehicle use, including freight movements also shows indications of worsening.

Transit's travel time indicator shows a 78% increase in average delay to trips in the AM peak period between November 2002-2003. In addition, AM peak period travel time variability has increased from 16% to 28%. This means that the average time spent travelling can vary by up to 28%.

Public perception of transport level of service is correspondingly negative. GWRC 2003 perception survey indicates 73% of respondents feel congestion is a concern. This is consistent with a Transit survey also conducted 2003 in which 70% of respondents believed congestion in Wellington needed either some or a lot of improvement. Western, Hutt and central network usage modelling indicates ongoing increases in use and peak period congestion. Commercial road users also express concern over additional cost to operations caused by congestion delays.

Utilisation of rail for freight carriage continues to decline. Commercial viability is limited, as is investment in the rail network. Level of service for rail is subsequently in decline. With congestion generated freight delay and anticipated increases in log production, a return to rail freight is being lauded. Significant investment will be necessary to ensure viability.

Public transport services have however, increased with an 8.4% increase in bus service kilometres travelled, new shelters and interchange facilities built, and

ongoing installation of bike lockers at train stations. The bus fleet is being replaced at a satisfactory rate.

Improved facilities for walking and cycling have also had positive effects on accessibility.

#### **4.3 Economic development**

Economic growth is occurring at a steady rate as discussed in section 3.2, however the development of the Wellington Regional Strategy signals a desire for ensured and increased growth, unimpeded by transport issues. Road congestion and poor level of service, which hinders movement of freight and people, is a significant concern.

#### **4.4 Personal security**

Transport provisions can impact positively or negatively on the perception of personal security. It is well accepted that providing lighting, open streetscape, and increasing pedestrian and cyclist numbers (eyes on the street) does improve the perception of personal security. Walking and cycling rates are declining in all the region's territorial authorities, except Wellington City. Correspondingly, Wellington City respondents to a perception survey felt the "safest" while walking (80% felt safe). Other TA areas ranged from 76% down to 46% or respondents feeling safe.

#### **4.5 Safety**

The road safety trend is increasing slightly across the region. Road safety in the 1990s made significant gains, with road casualties halved between 1990 and 2001. Since the low point of 1023 casualties in the region in 2001, numbers have been increasing. While the numbers are still low when compared to figures from the 1990s, one has to question the possible gains lost by complacency in this area. To maintain at least a static trend requires sustained effort in this area.

#### **4.6 Environment**

The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) includes a number of transport and energy policies aimed at reducing transport's negative impact upon the environment.

Land use policies are broadly aimed at improving accessibility and energy efficiency by way of compact development around public transport nodes and existing corridors, improved active mode facilities, and efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Noise and road runoff, while not specifically discussed in the RPS, are of increasing concern and are known negative externalities of transport. However, no definitive data is available for Wellington region. We would anticipate a reduction in the impact of transport with ongoing modal share of public transport and active mode facilities.

Air quality remains the key environmental and public health indicator for transport. Transport contributes 79% CO emissions, 85% of NO<sub>x</sub>, 35% of VOC, and 23% of PM<sub>10</sub>. All air quality indicators are experiencing minor increasing trends, however modelling shows that the transport contribution of these pollutants decreases over time with improving vehicle technologies, particularly efficiencies and alternative fuels.

## **5. Legislative and policy context**

The RLTS will be evidence-based, with clear linkages between issues and interventions. However, in responding to regional issues the RLTS must also be firmly integrated with the national framework.

The following sections give an overview of the national and regional legislative and policy context, and how the pressures and issues discussed above are integrated. A vision and objectives are also presented as an initial framework from which to develop the draft RLTS.

### **5.1 National framework**

The enactment of the LTMA 2003 made a number of amendments to the LTA 1998 and its requirements for producing a RLTS [s175(2)]. Primarily, a RLTS is now required to contribute to the overall aim of achieving an integrated, safe, responsive, and sustainable land transport system; and to take into account the five objectives of the New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS). These are:

- i. assists economic development
- ii. assists safety and personal security
- iii. improves access and mobility
- iv. protects and promotes public health; and
- v. ensures environmental sustainability.

These objectives fully encompass the issues and pressures identified in sections 3 and 4.

In addition, a RLTS must take into account the National Energy & Efficiency Conservation Strategy (NEECS), avoid to an extent reasonable adverse effects on the environment, and take into account the land transport funding likely to be available within the region during the period covered by the strategy (affordability).

The LTMA and amendments to the LTA were derived from the NZTS. The NZTS establishes five overarching principles for the transport system (figure 1). These translate to achieving the outcomes of an increased proportion of travel by public transport, reduced congestion, improved road safety, greater use of travel alternatives such as telecommuting, and the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure. The NEECS framework is comparable with its objectives of reduced energy use via reduced travel demand, improvements in the transport fleet, and improved provision and uptake of low energy transport options. Fleet technology enhancements are outside regional policy scope

however, the remaining two objectives incorporate well the outcomes listed in the NZTS. These outcomes in turn lead to the five objectives listed above and in figure 1.

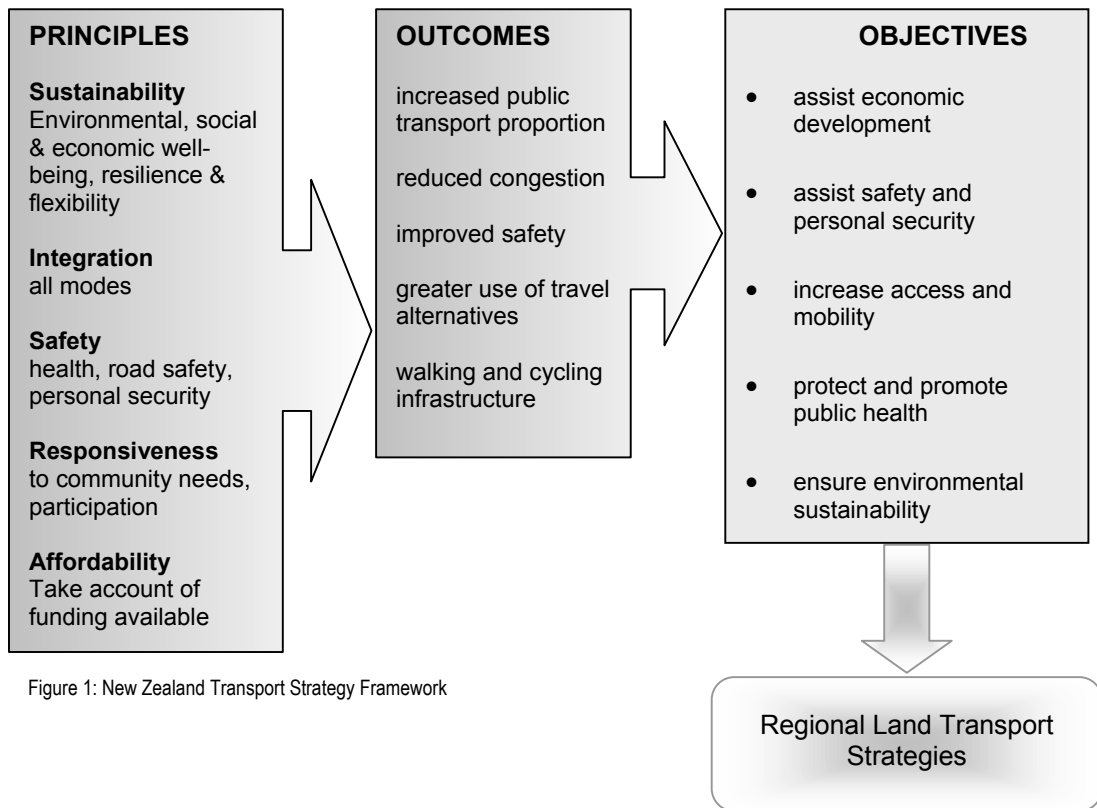


Figure 1: New Zealand Transport Strategy Framework

In addition to outlining the framework in figure 1, the NZTS is clear in describing transport as a service and not an end in itself. Transport systems serve to facilitate access to economic and social opportunities. This point is important in determining outcomes for transport, and thus recognising that these outcomes are there to aid delivery of greater community outcomes. This becomes significant at a regional level when adapting the national framework to deliver our transport and hence, community needs. Linking the RLTS with the GWRC LTCCP is therefore necessary and is discussed in section 5.2.

In order to be consistent with legislative requirements, it is imperative that our revised RLTS be firmly integrated to the national framework outlined in this section. Integration with the national framework as required by the LTA 1998 has in a sense predetermined RLTS objectives as being the five established by the NZTS. However, opting for the national objectives is not limiting, therefore analysis was necessary to ensure there were no regionally specific objectives required in addition to those of the national framework. Analysis, summarised in sections 3 and 4, did not provide any indication that additional objectives are necessary for the Wellington region. Our issues are well encompassed by the national objectives.

The need for compatibility with the national requirements is also reinforced by changes to the Transfund Allocation Process. Transfund is in the process of writing a guidance document that outlines the requirements a RLTS should

meet in order that appropriate proposals are advanced for inclusion to the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). RLTSs that are not integrated with the national framework, or proposals that do not stem from a RLTS produced in accordance with the Transfund guidance, are unlikely to be included in the NLTP.

The approach to developing the draft RLTS is evidence-based, collaborative, accountable and forward-looking to enable clear demonstration how and to what extent these national issues manifest within our region, and subsequently determine appropriate responses.

## 5.2 GWRC LTCCP

In addition to meeting national framework requirements, the revised RLTS needs to respond to and aid delivery of the LTCCP outcomes for the greater Wellington region. The LTCCP outlines four areas that have key implications for transport. These are Transport, Energy, Air and Safety & Hazards (figure 2). The four areas are inextricably linked with transport activities (if not entirely transport related), and as such, have established outcomes that require ongoing improvements to the current transport system.

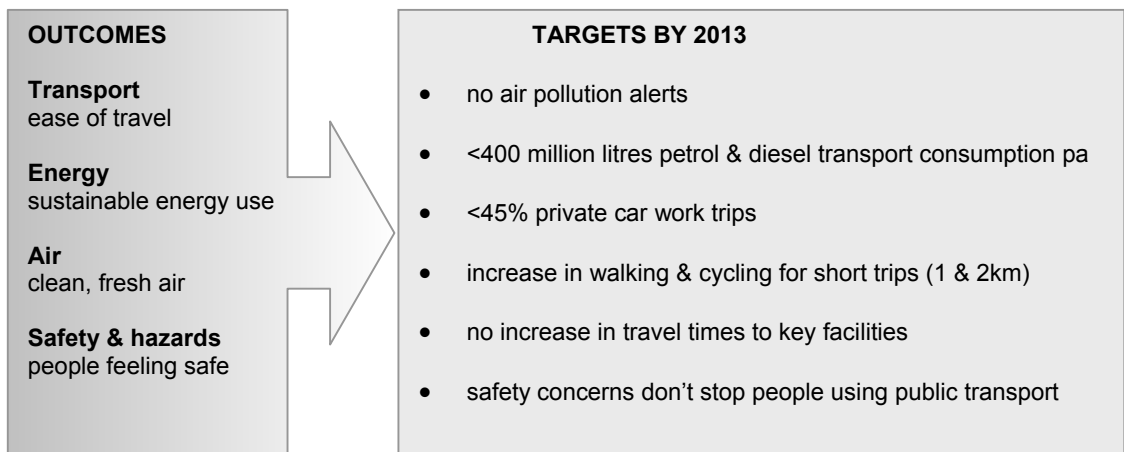


Figure 2: GWRC LTCCP framework for transport outcomes.

The LTCCP outcomes align well with the national framework and will further enable an integrated approach to revising the RLTS. The RLTS will play a role in achieving regional outcomes, while also contributing to national objectives. However, further revision of regional needs and community outcomes will result from the development of the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS).

## 5.3 Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS)

The WRS is a joint project of the councils of the Wellington metropolitan region working together to build an internationally competitive Wellington. It is primarily a growth strategy with an outlook to 2050. More detailed focus of action and priority will also be developed for the next 10 to 20 years to compliment other regional strategy processes with shorter outlooks.

Project development will formally commence on 1 July 2004. The successful delivery of the WRS will be significant in informing other regional strategy processes, and vice versa. Therefore, the RLTS review will be in full agreement and communication with the WRS process.

The WRS is firmly based in the proposition that growth for the region is necessary and desirable. It is aimed at sustainable economic and population growth which will protect the region's sense of place, build competitiveness, increase our quality of life and protect the values and communities that contribute to making the Wellington region different to anywhere else. Transport outcomes identified by the RLTS review will play a significant part in facilitating the growth sought by the WRS.

## **6. Vision**

The RLTS needs to inform the WRS and deliver on community outcomes of the LTCCP. A vision that encompasses similar desires to the above two documents is therefore required. The LTCCP is aimed at working towards a sustainable region to ensure our quality for life. The WRS is an economic and population growth strategy, which are significant drivers of transport demand.

Our current adopted vision for the RLTS is:

*“to deliver a balanced and sustainable land transport system that meets the needs of the regional community.”*

This vision does not fully encompass the spirit of growth embodied in the WRS. A vision that is promoted in the foreword of the current RLTS better represents the contribution required by the transport system, both to growth, and to sustainability. It is:

*“to enhance the region's growth in a way which is also both environmentally and socially sustainable.”*

It is recommended that this vision be adopted in principle for the development of the draft RLTS.

## **7. Objectives**

The current 1999-2004 RLTS objectives are largely reflected in those of the NZTS, with the exception of economic efficiency and affordability. However, under the new legislative requirements, efficiency and affordability are more appropriately used as package tests at the stage of policy and intervention development, rather than as objectives.

In addition, the discussion in preceding sections indicates the need for the new draft RLTS objectives to be those of the NZTS (figure 1). Technical analysis provides no indication to the contrary, or to the necessity for additional regionally specific objectives. Therefore, it is recommended that the NZTS objectives be adopted in principle for the development of the draft RLTS.



## 8. Communications

There is nothing to communicate.

## 9. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

(a) *adopt in principle the following vision:*

*“To enhance the region’s growth in a way which is also both environmentally and socially sustainable”.*

(b) *adopt in principle the following five objectives:*

(i) *assists economic development*

(ii) *assists safety and personal security*

(iii) *improves access and mobility*

(iv) *protects and promotes public health; and*

(v) *ensures environmental sustainability.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

**Lesley McConnell**  
Policy Advisor  
Access Planning

**Joe Hewitt**  
Manager  
Access Planning

**Dave Watson**  
Divisional Manager  
Transport