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Committee Regional Transport
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Draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan for approval

1. Purpose

To seek the Committee's agreement to release the draft Regional Wairarapa Corridor Plan, set out in **Attachment 1**, for consultation.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

3.1 Introduction

The Wairarapa Corridor is defined as: *State Highway 2 from north of Te Marua, Upper Hutt, over the Rimutaka Hill through to Mount Bruce north of Masterton; and the Wairarapa railway line from north of Maymorn, Upper Hutt through to Masterton; and includes State Highway 53 between Featherston and Martinborough.*

The current Wairarapa Corridor Plan was adopted in December 2003. The Wairarapa Corridor Plan was the first plan, alongside the Hutt Corridor Plan, to be adopted. It is now due to be reviewed to reflect changes that have occurred in the past 6 years.

The review of the existing Wairarapa Corridor Plan seeks to:

- Ensure alignment of the plan with the strategic direction provided by the Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007 – 2016 and its 2009/10 refresh.
- Update the plan to take account of new trends, information, transport studies and land use policies relevant to this corridor.

The review will also determine whether those projects identified as beyond ten years in the existing plan are still relevant, whether they should be brought forward, and whether any other projects or initiatives are required to address emerging issues.

3.2 Review Process

Review of the Wairarapa Corridor Plan commenced in August 2009. The review has been led by Greater Wellington with assistance from a technical working group comprising officers from Masterton District Council, Carterton District Council, South Wairarapa District Council, Upper Hutt City Council and the NZ Transport Agency. Information has also been provided by the Wellington Regional Strategy office, Grow Wellington and the Central Area Road Transport Forum.

The review process to date has involved development of a comprehensive background and issues paper (**Attachment 2**) which pulls together, at a high level, the key information from a number of data sources and studies to provide a picture of the key pressures and issues for the corridor.

Following review of the background paper and its key conclusions by the technical group, a draft corridor plan has been prepared for consultation.

4. Policy framework for the Wairarapa Corridor Plan

Corridor plans are non-statutory documents used to identify and agree the needs and associated major projects or measures along our region's four main transport corridors. Multi-modal action programmes within our corridor plans set out short-medium, and longer term measures to be progressed.

The draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan has been developed in the context of the New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS) 2008, Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport Funding 2009, Safer Journeys 2020 and other relevant national level policy documents. It takes into account the signals in the GPS around priority for infrastructure and services that contribute to economic growth and productivity, and the need to reduce deaths and serious injuries as a result of road crashes.

The draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan sits alongside the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) and contributes to the direction and desired outcomes of provided by the strategy.

The vision of the Wellington RLTS is for *an integrated land transport system that supports the region's people and prosperity in a way that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.*

The RLTS key outcomes are:

- Increased peak period passenger transport mode share
- Increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced severe road congestion
- Improved regional road safety
- Improved land use and transport integration
- Improved regional freight efficiency.

The draft plan also takes account of the land use direction provided by the Proposed Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan and the economic growth considerations provided by the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS).

5. Transport trends

The following transport trends were identified for the Wairarapa corridor:

- Road traffic volumes in the corridor are slowly but steadily increasing on State Highway 2 and 53.
- On a daily average, around 5,000 vehicles (of which 300 are heavy vehicles) travel over the Rimutaka Hill Road.
- Heavy commercial vehicle volumes are generally showing an increase, although a drop off in 2008 may be attributed to the current economic recession.
- Road safety trends are getting worse, as is the case with the rest of the region, with Wairarapa often over-represented in some statistics.
- Masterton has the highest cyclist journey to work mode share in the region (3.7% in 2006). Wairarapa areas have the highest proportion of journey to work trips made by walking in the region after Wellington City.
- Cyclist and motorcyclist crash rates are getting worse, with these vulnerable road users over-represented compared with the rest of the region – particularly cyclists in Masterton.
- Patronage on Wairarapa rail and bus services has been steadily increasing over recent years.
- 91% of journey to work trips made by Wairarapa residents were within Wairarapa.
- Wairarapa has the highest proportion of people who work from home (13% in 2006) compared with other parts of the Wellington region.

6. Key pressures on the network

The following key pressures were identified for the Wairarapa corridor:

- Population growth in Wairarapa will be fairly static or declining over next 20 years, with an aging population (Stats NZ).
- A small but steady increase in household numbers is expected, together with a decreasing household size.
- Both employment and economic growth are expected to be fairly static over the next 20 years.
- Significant growth in forestry and timber products is expected from 2015 onwards.
- Freight movements are expected to double in Wellington region by 2031.
- Growth in tourism and associated retail activity (accommodation, cafés and restaurants) is expected to continue, while the primary and manufacturing industries are likely to decline.

7. What we plan to do

This plan defines a number of packages for improvements to the transport network within the Wairarapa Corridor to respond to the current trends and key pressures as identified above.

The plan identifies measures that should be completed over the next ten years, as well as longer term measures that should be developed over the next ten years and then programmed to be implemented as conditions and funding allows.

Over the next ten years the measures in the plan are focused on:

- Improving the safety of State Highway 2 and 53, and the adjacent local road network to minimise the contribution of road network deficiencies to road crash casualties.
- Improving walking and cycling networks and facilities, with an emphasis on safety improvements in urban areas, particularly in and around Masterton, and on key cycling routes between townships.
- Providing for freight and tourism trips as safely and efficiently as possible through improvements to the road network and supporting the transfer of freight to rail where practical.
- Maintaining the current level of service provided by public transport for commuting to other parts of the region (bus and rail) and within Wairarapa (bus services).
- Continuing a programme of travel demand management measures relevant to the relatively rural character of this corridor.

A detailed table of the proposed measures is set out in the draft corridor plan (**Attachment 1**) with associated responsibility, timing and indicative cost.

8. Consultation Plan

8.1 Key consultation messages

The key messages for consultation on the draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan will be based around the pressures and issues outlined in sections 6 and 7 above, and what we plan to do to address these over the first ten years and longer term.

It will be important to make clear the relationship of the corridor plan with the Regional Land Transport Strategy and the other corridor and implementation plans.

The purpose of the corridor plan as a high level multi-modal plan that sets out key measures to be progressed in the corridor is also an important message. More detailed studies undertaken by the relevant lead agency have informed development of the measures in the plan, and will continue to inform the detailed development of any individual projects through the funding process and construction stages.

8.2 Scope of consultation

The Committee is not required to follow the special consultative procedure under the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 in relation to any corridor plan review because they are not statutory documents required by any legislation.

While the development of corridor plans must follow the general principles of consultation set out in Section 82 of the LGA, the Committee has discretion about the scale and scope of consultation.

In considering the best way to consult on the draft corridor plan, officers were mindful of the feedback received from the general public through recent consultation processes around consultation fatigue.

Region-wide communication of the corridor plan review is appropriate. However, the focus of the consultation will be with key agencies, businesses and organisations with an interest in the development of this particular transport corridor and the local communities within Wairarapa.

8.3 Target audience

The assistance of the technical working group members will be sought to identify key interested parties to send consultation material to and to engage with through the consultation period. Local council officers are in a good position to identify those community groups with a transport interest in Wairarapa, together with any key businesses or agencies who may wish to have an input.

Masterton, South Wairarapa and Carterton District Councils, the NZ Transport Agency, and Greater Wellington are also key stakeholders as they are the agencies responsible for implementing the measures in the plan.

8.4 Consultation elements

It is proposed to communicate the draft plan to the target audience and the regional community, and invite feedback, in the following ways:

- Media coverage – this will include a media release, article in ‘Our region’, and potentially features in Wairarapa community newspapers and opinion pieces as deemed appropriate.
- Public notices - in regional and Wairarapa newspapers (Dominion Post, Wairarapa Times Age, and Wairarapa News) and other relevant Wairarapa community newspapers as appropriate.
- Greater Wellington website - dedicated web page including a pdf of the draft plan and background paper, together with an online submission form.
- Mail out - to key stakeholders and interested groups/businesses. This will include a copy of the draft plan together with an invitation to provide feedback and details of how and by when to make a submission.
- Greater Wellington officers will also make themselves available to talk with any interested parties or councils during the consultation period.

8.5 Public access to the consultation documents

The draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan will be available from:

- Greater Wellington offices in Wellington and Masterton
- South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton District Council offices
- Public libraries throughout the region
- Greater Wellington's website (links from local council websites)

8.6 Links with RLTS refresh consultation

The timing of consultation on the draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan is currently expected to be around the same time as consultation on the draft RLTS 2010 – 2040. If this is the case, there will be opportunities to coordinate these two consultation processes through elements such as the mail out, media releases, public notices, and web site links.

9. Timeframes

Steps	Timing
Draft plan to RTC for approval	December 2009
Consultation period	Feb/March 2010
Submissions analysis	March/April 2010
Hearings if required (combined with RLTS refresh)	Late April 2010
Final Wairarapa Corridor Plan adopted	16 June 2010

10. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report;***
2. ***Notes the content of the report;***
3. ***Agrees to release the Draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan, as set out in Attachment 1, for public consultation;***
4. ***Agrees to the consultation process for the Draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan, as set out in section 8 of this report; and***
5. ***Delegates to the Chair of the Regional Transport Committee authority to approve any final amendments to the draft plan resulting from this Committee meeting.***

Report prepared by: Report approved by: Report approved by:

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Senior Policy Advisor	Acting Manager Transport Strategy Development	Divisional Manager

Attachment 1: Draft Wairarapa Corridor Plan – October 2009

Attachment 2: Wairarapa Corridor Plan Review – Background and Issues Paper Oct 2009