

“Here to there”

A summary of the draft Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010-2040

What is the Regional Land Transport Strategy?

The draft Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) sets the direction for the region's transport system for the next 30 years. Making sure our region's transport network is developed so that it meets the needs and aspirations of our communities is important to help make the Wellington region an even better place to live, work and play.

This document is a summary of the full RLTS. It sets out our vision and desired outcomes for the region's transport network, the pressures and issues, and our preferred option for investment in the transport network to achieve that vision.

Our transport system will continue to play a vital role in the future success and sustainability of our region and we encourage you to take this opportunity to let us know what you think about the strategy's long term direction.

Who develops the RLTS?

The Regional Land Transport Strategy is developed by the Wellington Regional Transport Committee, a standing committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington). The committee is made up of representatives from GWRC, all local councils in the region, the NZ Transport Agency, and individuals representing access and mobility, economic development, public health, safety and personal security, environmental sustainability and cultural interests.

Why do we need a new strategy?

This RLTS 2010 - 2040 replaces the Wellington RLTS 2007 - 2016. A new strategy is required because there have been changes since 2007 in both legislation and political context.

New government direction since adoption of the current RLTS includes new long-term national targets for transport, short-medium term impacts to be achieved through funding of the transport system and a new way of prioritising transport funding.

This strategy takes account of this direction through new regional targets and addresses a renewed emphasis on economic growth and productivity. The Land Transport Management Act 2003 requires the Regional Transport Committee to renew its RLTS by July 2010.

What do we want to achieve?

Through extensive consultation during development of our previous RLTS, the region agreed on the fundamental things we want the transport network to achieve. These things are not considered to have moved significantly over the past few years and are set out in our vision, objectives and key outcomes below.

Our Vision

To deliver an integrated land transport system that supports the region's people and prosperity in a way that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

Our Objectives

- Assist economic and regional development
- Assist safety and personal security
- Improve access, mobility and reliability
- Protect and promote public health
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Ensure that the Regional Land Transport Programme is affordable for the regional community.

Our Key Outcomes

- 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

A new inter-regional outcome was also developed:

- Improved safety, efficiency and reliability of strategic road, public transport and freight links to the north of the region.

What are the key transport pressures?

The RLTS identifies a number of pressures for the transport network with a 30 year outlook. Many of these are likely to result in an increasing demand for travel and a need to invest in our transport network in response. Some of the key pressures are:

Population and household growth

The region is forecast to experience moderate population growth, with an extra 62,000 people expected to live here by 2016, a 9% increase from 2001.¹ Further out, population projections become more uncertain. However, under a medium growth scenario the regional population growth rate is projected to slow after 2026. Under a high growth scenario the total population is expected to reach 600,000 by 2041. The number of households is also expected to grow, with household sizes getting smaller. This is likely to result in more trip making. Even with new technologies and initiatives that help us reduce the need to travel to access what we need, population and household growth is still expected to drive an increase in overall travel demand.

Aging population

Like national and international trends, our regional population is ageing with a high and growing proportion of people aged over 65 years. For a number of reasons, people in this age group rely on public transport as their means of accessing the goods, services, and amenities that they need. An increasing proportion of the population falling into this age group is expected to put more pressure on public transport services in the future.

Economic growth

In 2008 the Wellington Region contributed around 13% of all the goods and services produced in New Zealand (GDP or Gross Domestic Product). The region's economy is expected to continue to grow at a modest rate (1.8% per annum under a medium growth scenario), driving an

¹ GWRC. 2008/2009 Annual Report on the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

increasing demand for travel and freight movement. Freight movements are projected to double in the Wellington region over the life of the strategy.

Volatile fuel prices

Fuel prices are expected to continue to be volatile and continue to rise over the next 30 years. Transport demand and trip making are likely to be affected by this, depending on the timing and availability of electric vehicles and alternative fuels.

Increasing travel demand

Good accessibility and the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services are crucial to the success of our region. Increasing travel demand can result in a number of challenges for our transport system in relation to congestion, road safety, CO₂ emissions, and network reliability.

Road freight will be negatively affected by severe traffic congestion and poor reliability, and a forecast significant increase in freight movements could also have a large contribution to the region's CO₂ problem.

The preferred option for addressing these challenges

In developing the strategy, work was carried out to identify a preferred strategic option for the region's land transport network for the next 30 years.

Six strategic options for the 2040 transport network were developed based on different ways we might invest in our transport network and how tools like road pricing might be used. Nine futures scenarios were then created to take account of the key things outside the direct influence of the strategy that will affect the demand for transport. These were growth (economic and population), transport costs, and land use (higher density development versus low density 'sprawl').

The six options were tested against the range of future scenarios to determine how well they achieved the region's desired outcomes around congestion, public transport use and CO₂ emissions.

Mixed investment in the best performing public transport and roading projects contributes most to a positive result across all outcomes. However, even the mixed option does not effectively deal with growing transport demand and increasing CO₂ emissions under higher growth scenarios. Therefore depending on the level of future growth, a pricing mechanism such as road pricing, could be introduced to help achieve our outcomes or to defer large investment in new projects.

The preferred strategic option is therefore to continue to promote investment in public transport, roads, walking and cycling, while continuing to advocate for road pricing to be made available to the region as a tool we can use if needed.

How will the strategy be implemented?

The RLTS is a high level strategic document that provides the policy framework and the long-term direction for development of the transport network. It is not the role of the strategy to identify specific projects and activities.

The development of separate, shorter term corridor plans and implementation plans under the policy framework provided by this strategy allows for the identification of projects and measures to address the current and future needs for each corridor or mode of travel as a result of land use development, growth and associated transport demand. These plans are reviewed every 3-5 years under a separate review process. Projects identified through these plans are put forward for funding consideration through the Regional Land Transport Programme process.

What funding might be available?

The strategy is required to take account of the funding that is likely to be available over the 30 year period it covers.

The National Land Transport Programme provides an indication of regional funding available for the three years from 2009 – 2012, with possible funding ranges over a ten year period at the national level only. We don't have any information about the amount of funding that will be available for transport in our region after 2019, but we do know that in the past there has been a gap between the cost of the projects we want in the region and the available funding.

The strategy takes account of this by acknowledging that funding will not be unlimited and that we will need to prioritise projects and make choices about what outcomes are important to us as a region. The strategy also suggests looking at other possible sources of funding (such as road pricing) which could be used to fund any future shortfall.

The strategy includes a policy to guide the priority order of projects and activities put forward for funding in the three yearly Regional Land Transport Programme.

- First-priority activities are those required to maintain the existing level of service of the region's transport network or those necessary to meet statutory transport planning obligations.
- Second-priority activities are those relatively low cost studies, demand management, walking and cycling activities, minor safety and other improvement works (<\$4.5m) that are expected to help the region move quickly toward achieving RLTS outcomes.
- Third-priority activities are the high cost 'large new projects' (>\$4.5m).

What improvements can we expect?

Under the long term direction provided by the strategy the following types of improvements and development of the region's transport network can be expected:

- Improvements in road safety throughout the region
- Improvements to the safety and reliability of access along State Highway 1 through the region
- Improved access to Wellington City CBD, the regional hospital in Newtown, Wellington's port and airport
- Development of a high quality public transport spine from Wellington railway station through to the regional hospital and the airport
- Region wide improvements to the public transport network including real time information, integrated tickets, and both service and infrastructure improvements to the bus and rail networks
- Improvements to walking and cycling networks. Education, promotion and awareness of walking and cycling. Improved safety for walking and cycling
- Better use of the existing transport network and more travel options
- Improvements in journey time reliability – for both public transport and the road network
- Less severe traffic congestion on our roads, particularly at peak times
- Improved east-west connections for people and freight
- Improved rail freight opportunities
- Better integration between transport modes
- Improved information for all transport system users.

How will the strategy contribute to road safety?

The strategy seeks to improve regional road safety, including improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and targets a significant reduction in road crashes in our region. Contributing to this outcome will involve a system wide approach using a combination of measures such as enforcement, education, advocacy and promotion, and engineering. A new Regional Road Safety Plan was developed in 2009 to identify specific measures and responsibilities.

How does the strategy encourage integrating land use and transport?

The strategy encourages integration between land use and transport infrastructure by reflecting sustainable land use principles such as the importance of a compact, well designed urban form; the need to encourage higher density housing and mixed use development close to centres and public transport links; and the need to encourage local employment opportunities and facilities - to improve travel choices and reduce travel demand. The strategy also seeks the provision for walking, cycling and public transport within all new land use development, including better connectivity for these modes.

How does the strategy support economic growth and productivity?

The reliable and effective movement of people, goods and services is crucial to ensure continued economic growth and prosperity nationally, regionally and locally. The strategy recognises the importance of good access to the Wellington City CBD and regional centres, the port and airport in supporting economic growth. It recognises the regional and national significance of State Highway 1 in providing access to key employment, freight and tourism destinations. The need for new and improved east-west transport links is also identified to improve connections between key freight destinations.

How does the strategy address traffic congestion?

Traffic congestion can have a significant detrimental impact on access and mobility, and therefore our economy. In the Wellington region we are well placed to provide public transport as an efficient way of moving people to and from employment in the Wellington City CBD and between many of our region's centres. Much of the regions urban form runs along key transport corridors, making public transport a good option particularly for journey to work, and as such a vital contributor to reducing severe congestion on our road network. In addition, encouraging walking and cycling for short trips, easing key traffic bottlenecks on the road network, improving the efficiency of the existing road network, and advocating for road pricing as a longer term option also seek to address congestion issues.

Why consider road pricing?

The strategy signals the need to consider road pricing as a longer term intervention to encourage efficient mode choices and to make significant contributions to the strategy's desired outcomes. This will be particularly important under higher growth scenarios or if funding is limited. An important factor in the acceptability and success of any future road pricing scheme will be the availability of good alternatives. An efficient, reliable public transport network that can accommodate the demand generated by such a scheme is therefore an important consideration of any road pricing scheme.

What are we doing about climate change?

The Wellington region's contribution to reducing transport related greenhouse gas emissions is only a small part of a wider national commitment. However, the need for the region to play its part in reducing its share of greenhouse gas emissions is recognised. While improvements in fuel efficiency and advances in the availability of alternative fuels are likely to be the key contributors to reducing transport generated emissions, well utilised and efficient public transport services will also have a role in contributing to greenhouse gas reductions. Looking for efficiency improvements in the heavy vehicle fleet will also be very important given they are a fast growing market segment. Climate change is likely to have an impact on the transport sector through

increased rain, higher sea levels and more frequent storms. Considering the potential impacts of climate change and our ability to adapt to them will also be important.

How have we taken account of the rising cost of fuel?

Fuel prices are expected to be volatile and continue to rise over the next 30 years. At the regional level, encouraging use of active transport modes, providing public transport and promoting more efficient land use planning are the key ways we plan to address this. For longer length trips public transport is expected to have an important role in providing an affordable travel option - particularly with an increasing proportion of electric trains and buses in our region. Having good travel choices and alternatives to the motor vehicle will make us more resilient to fuel price volatility while new technologies are being developed and until such time as alternative fuels or electric vehicles become widely available. However, the strategy does take account of the likelihood that some form of road based transport will be the dominant means of travel in the future.

Timeline

February 2010 – Consultation starts
March 2010 – Consultation closes
April 2010 – Public hearings
May 2010 – RLTS finalised
June 2010 – RLTS adopted

Find out more

Go to our website at www.gw.govt.nz/rlts where you can read or download a copy of the full strategy.

To request a printed copy of the strategy, phone 04 802 0357 or pick one up free from the Greater Wellington Regional Council offices at 142 Wakefield Street, Wellington or Chapel Street, Masterton.

Alternatively, visit your local council or local library to view a copy.

Have your say

There is a submission form at the back of this summary booklet. You can also make an online submission on our website at www.gw.govt.nz/rlts, or simply write to us at:

RLTS Submissions, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Freepost 181120, PO Box 11646, Manners Street, Wellington 6142.

Or you can email your submission to us at info@gw.govt.nz.

Submission closing date

Submissions must be received in writing by no later than 5pm on **x March 2010**.

Please make sure you include your name, address and phone number, and if you wish to be heard in support of your submission.

If you indicate in your submission that you would like to speak in support of your submission, you will be contacted about a suitable time once the hearing dates have been confirmed.

Please note that any submission you make may become publicly available if a request for it is made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. If you are making a submission as an individual, Greater Wellington will consider removing your personal details if you request this in your submission.

If you need further information regarding the draft strategy or the submission process please email info@gw.govt.nz) or phone 04 802 0357.

Feedback Form

To be finalised but will include:

- Address for submissions and closing date.
- Submitter contact details – Name, Organisation, Postal Address, Phone number, email – Signed/Date
- Wish to be heard?

Feedback sought:

1. Do you agree with the strategy’s long term vision for the transport network?
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
2. Have we missed any key transport pressures and issues for the region?
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3. Do you agree that mixed investment in all transport modes, with road pricing as a possible longer term tool is the right approach?
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. What other policy options or approaches could we have considered?
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5. Do you have any comments about the proposed 2020 targets in the strategy?
.....
6. Overall, do you support the strategy? YES / NO
7. Please provide any additional comments below.....