

Submission from the Regional Transport Committee on the Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan 2010 Discussion Document

This submission has been prepared on behalf of the Wellington Regional Transport Committee (RTC), which is responsible for developing and maintaining the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) and the Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP).

The Regional Public Transport Plan (PT Plan) is developed by Greater Wellington's Transport and Access Committee in accordance with the Public Transport Management Act 2008 (PTMA). The PT Plan is required to 'give effect to' the public transport service components of the RLTS.

The RTC thanks Greater Wellington for the opportunity to provide feedback on this discussion document as the first stage in developing a new PT Plan.

The proposed Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010 – 2040 is currently being developed. The following comments on the discussion document for the PT Plan are based on the version of the proposed RLTS approved for consultation at the 9 March 2010 RTC meeting.

1. Framework for public transport in the RLTS

The RLTS provides direction for public transport through its vision statement and objectives, which are supported by outcomes, targets and policies. The public transport aspiration in the RLTS vision statement is:

Public transport will provide an excellent option for an increasing number of people, particularly at peak times along key commuter corridors. Public transport trip times and comfort will compete reliably and favourably with private cars for a majority of commuter trips. The public transport system will effectively connect people with key destinations. All public transport services will be fully accessible, including physical access, access to information and simple streamlined ticketing.

This vision is supported by the following outcomes:

- 1.1 Increased peak period public transport mode share
- 1.2 Increased off-peak public transport use and community connectedness
- 1.3 Improved public transport accessibility for all, including the transport disadvantaged
- 1.4 Reduced public transport journey times compared to travel by private car
- 1.5 Increased public transport reliability

Section 1.1 of the PT Plan Discussion Document (page 10) states the purpose of the PT Plan, as set out in the PTMA, is to:

1. give effect to the public transport service components of the RLTS, and
2. contribute to achieving an affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable land transport system in an efficient and effective manner.

Table 10 (page 56) identifies the public transport service components of the RLTS. The RTC agrees the references for those components in the current 2007 RLTS are complete and accurate. We also note the table will be updated when the proposed RLTS 2010 – 2040 is finalised.

Table 11 (page 59) identifies how the PT Plan will contribute to assisting economic development, assisting safety and personal security, improving access and mobility, protecting and promoting public health and ensuring environmental sustainability. These objectives are consistent with the objectives of the RLTS.

The RTC would like to see integration with other modes of travel identified as a contribution to 'improving access and mobility' in Table 11.

2. Funding and Affordability

The RLTS also contains an objective for the RLTP to be affordable to the regional community.

The RTC acknowledges the funding policy framework and funding sources identified in section 2.2 (page 13) which the PT Plan discussion document takes into account.

In relation to section 2.2.3, the RTC notes that the Wellington RLTP sets out the region's priority of transport projects and activities for funding. This priority is then considered by the NZ Transport Agency when developing the National Land Transport Programme. The RLTP must be consistent with the Government Policy Statement.

3. Role of Public Transport

The RTC supports the access and congestion relief role of public transport (Section 3.1.1, page 16) as this is consistent with the role of public transport identified in chapter 9 of the RLTS and will contribute to the RLTS objectives and outcomes.

4. PT Plan target

The RTC notes the proposal (page 17) to include a target for public transport accessibility in the PT Plan which is similar to the strategic RLTS accessibility target for the public transport network, but which is refined to reflect the role of public transport within the 'integrated public transport framework' as set out in section 3.2 of the discussion document.

The RTC believes that any accessibility target in the PT Plan should be well aligned with the wording and intent of the RLTS target, and should not be less ambitious than the targeted % of population within 400m and 800m of particular service frequencies than is set out in the RLTS target.

We request that officers work together to develop an agreed wording for the strategic RLTS target. The RTC supports the potential inclusion of operational targets in the PT Plan to measure minimum and targeted service levels for public transport.

The RTC notes that feedback is currently being sought on the strategic targets in the RLTS as part of the proposed RLTS consultation process. The proposed strategic targets were agreed following review by the RTC technical working group and the RTC itself. Any changes to the strategic targets will be considered before the final RLTS is adopted.

5. Transport Disadvantaged

The RLTS recognises the need to provide for the transport disadvantaged. It refers to the PT Plan for a working definition of transport disadvantaged.

The RLTS includes a policy to 'ensure the provision for public transport services and concessions recognise the needs of the transport disadvantaged (8.1.n)'. As such, the RTC supports the attributes, groups, and provisions for the transport disadvantaged identified in section 3.1.3 (page 17-18).

6. Integrated public transport network framework

Overall, the RTC endorses the integrated public transport network framework described in section 3.2 (page 20).

The RTC believes that the layered service approach described in section 3.2.1 (page 21) will contribute to the RLTS objectives, outcomes and targets and is consistent with the RLTS policies. This approach will help ensure an efficient and effective public transport network that is an attractive and viable alternative to travel by private car.

The layered approach also well aligns with other regions and will help provide consistent planning and management of public transport at a national level.

The RTC supports the description of the 'role and function', 'operating characteristics' and 'infrastructure and right of way requirements' for each layer of the public transport network as set out in Appendix 1 (starting on page 42). We note that the described 'operating characteristics' of the Targeted services in Appendix 1 (page 44) do not provide for the current rail services through Wairarapa which are identified as targeted services in Figure 2 on page 26.

We note that the priority public transport network (Figure 2, page 26), formed primarily by the Rapid Transit Network (RTN) and Quality Transit Network (QTN), links key regional destinations in a way that is consistent with the RLTS, Regional Policy Statement and Wellington Regional Strategy.

The RTC believes this priority public transport network will to contribute to the land use and transport integration aspirations of the RLTS in the long term as well as reduce severe congestion and greenhouse gas emissions from transport in the short to medium term.

7. Public transport objectives

The RTC supports the proposed public transport objectives listed in Table 8 (page 32) as these are consistent with the direction for public transport signalled in the RLTS.

The RTC would like to see 'reliability' be considered throughout the four 'policy areas' during development of the draft PT Plan. The need for greater reliability of the public transport network is a consistent theme in public submissions considered by the RTC.

8. Service Reviews

The RTC endorses and strongly supports the intention to schedule public transport service reviews alongside or closely following RLTS Corridor Plan reviews. This will enable feedback from consultation on the high level Corridor Plan reviews to inform the more detailed public transport service reviews in a timely manner.

9. Conclusion

The RTC believes that the PT Plan discussion document is well aligned with the existing 2007 RLTS and proposed RLTS 2010 – 2040.

The discussion document provides a robust platform to develop a new PT Plan that will give effect to the public transport service components of the RLTS.