



**Report** 05.681  
**Date** 30 November 2005  
**File** TP/01/04/02

**Committee** Regional Land Transport  
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## **RLTS Review - Strategic Options Feedback**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide the Committee with an analysis of the submissions received in relation to the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) Strategic Options Consultation Document.

### **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**

The RLTS Strategic Options Consultation Document was developed to obtain stakeholder and public feedback on the initial views of the Regional Land Transport Committee (RLTC) for transport needs over the next ten years. The document describes the RLTS review process and its close relationship with the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) Growth Framework.

The release of the Strategic Options Consultation Document was fully aligned with the consultation on the WRS Growth Framework, both were launched on 15 August 2005, with the closing date for feedback being 30 September 2005. Submitters were asked to respond to issues identified in the document, along with the draft RLTS vision, objectives and outcomes, and the three strategic options described:

Option 1: Planned Investment

Option 2: Advanced Passenger Transport

Option 3: Advanced Rooding

The document reported a ten year strategic transport funding envelope of \$3.4B. The envelope was made up of five basic components: roading

maintenance, roading improvements, passenger rail, bus services and travel demand management.

A meeting of the RLTC was held on 23 November to hear those submitters who wished to speak in support of their submission. Following the hearings, amendments were made to the summary of submissions to ensure they appropriately reflected the full submission. Any additional significant issues raised have been identified in this report.

An analysis of the key issues and themes identified through the written and oral submissions process is provided as **attachment 1**. The feedback from the consultation process will be used to assist in development of a draft RLTS, including a preferred strategic option and defined funding programme. The draft RLTS will be released for a further round of consultation before adoption of the final strategy.

## **4. Comment**

### **4.1 Submissions received**

Ninety-five submissions were received in response to the consultation document. Over one-third of submissions were received from individuals. A substantial number were also received from representatives of community-based organisations and special interest groups. Regional branches of national organisations also provided feedback on the document.

The remainder of submissions received were from government agencies, such as Transit New Zealand (Transit), a range of District Health Boards (DHBs), and territorial authorities from within and bordering the greater Wellington region.

### **4.2 Overview of submissions**

Responses received were varied with some stating the description of issues in the document were adequate, and supported the vision, objectives and outcomes while others identified additional issues or analysis that could be included in the document.

A significant number of submitters identified Option 2 (Advanced Passenger Transport) as their preferred option based on the information provided. However many submitters did not select an option and several believed that the document did not provide adequate information to allow selection of a preferred option.

A report on submissions by MWH New Zealand Ltd is provided as **attachment 2** and describes in detail a number of key issues and common themes raised by submitters in relation to the consultation document. These included:

1. Inadequate information provided in the document for accurate public feedback to be provided.

2. The need to address further issues and concepts in the document, including:
  - carbon dioxide emissions and the Kyoto Protocol
  - rising petrol prices
  - ten year timeframe and environmental sustainability
  - accessibility, health, disability and an aging population
  - better integration with land use planning and social sustainability
  - better coverage of transport of freight; and
3. Passenger transport versus roading.

The following additional further issues and concepts to be addressed were identified through the hearing of oral submissions:

- Vision should cover social aspects
- Adequacy of measuring environmental sustainability
- Importance of corridor linkages
- Consideration of local travel, not just arterial commuter trips
- Lack of detailed data behind analysis in tables and a need to explain; congestion, CO<sub>2</sub>, and cycling conclusions
- Costs, user pays, and affordability
- North/south route as a national priority
- Sustainable cities principle
- Civil defence and route reliability issues
- Important to consider trip types other than commuter trips
- RLTS requires more explicit linking with other strategies/studies
- The Wellington City Gateway project, the Hataitai tunnel, and the Cook Strait were also identified as important.

#### **4.3 Feedback from the Wellington Regional Strategy Growth Framework**

Consultation on the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) Growth Framework discussion document was carried out in alignment with consultation on the RLTS Strategic Options consultation document. In addition to submissions, Decision Research Limited was commissioned by the WRS project group to survey the views of people within the region.

Submissions of relevance to the RLTS called for improvements to public transport, better provision for walkers and cyclists, and reductions in peak-time traffic congestion. There was support for both the reinforcement and improvement of compact corridor form, and the design of major roads to support our centres. However within both these action areas there was a strong response in relation to consideration of local communities when planning major new roads.

Submitters also identified the need to ensure both land and infrastructure are used efficiently and local councils' roles in encouraging industry in existing areas and in making it easier for people to live near public transport networks.

A varied response was received to issues such as peak-time traffic congestion and getting to and from Wellington Airport depending on where the respondents lived. For example, respondents who lived in Wellington City and the Wairarapa were relatively unconcerned by these issues compared to those living elsewhere in the Region, such as Kapiti.

A more detailed summary of the transport related feedback from the WRS Growth Framework consultation is included in the consultants report provided in **attachment 2**.

#### **4.4 Recommendation on a preferred strategic option**

Analysis of the three strategic options against the draft RLTS objectives and outcomes using the region's strategic transport model concluded that the Planned Investment option performed best over the range of indicators. It should be noted that Planned Investment option is not 'business as usual' and involves a substantial increase in government funding for PT, walking, cycling and TDM in the Wellington region compared with previous years.

However, feedback from the strategic options consultation process indicated a clear preference for the Advanced Passenger Transport option.

The Advanced PT scenario will best address the risks of peak oil and Kyoto Protocol commitments, in addition to supporting demand management initiatives. The analysis however, shows that this scenario is likely to lead to increased road congestion as a result of an associated reduction in funding of roading improvements. Increased road congestion is likely to impact on the regions economic growth and development due to increased travel times and delays, particularly in relation to freight journeys between regional centres which can only be accommodated by road.

It is important to consider the potential impact of oil price rises on congestion levels, however there is still uncertainty regarding the timing of 'peak oil'. It is also difficult to determine the level of impact, if any, that rising oil prices would have on public preference for private car use.

Taking account of the clear support for the Advanced PT scenario, while also recognising the need to balance all objectives of the New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS) and RLTS, it is recommended that a strategic option be developed which sits between Planned Investment and Advanced PT to be used as the framework for development of the new RLTS. A key principle of this option will be a greater emphasis on passenger transport within future corridor plans and programmes developed under the new RLTS.

Further workshops of the RLTC will be required to develop the preferred option. Consideration will need to be given to increased funding of PT, though this is likely to mean reduced roading improvements as the funding envelope is largely fixed.

#### 4.5 Other recommendations for development of the draft RLTS

- Include sections in the draft RLTS which discuss: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and Kyoto Protocol; rising petrol prices; long term environmental sustainability issues; health, disability and accessibility issues.
- Identify any improvements which can be made to the draft RLTS in relation to public health and environmental sustainability through carrying out a Health Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment on the draft RLTS to ensure full consideration has been given to the relevant issues. This analysis will be undertaken once a preferred option has been developed by the Committee.
- Ensure the outcomes of the WRS Growth Framework process are taken into consideration in developing the draft RLTS to ensure an integrated approach is taken to land use and transportation planning in the Wellington region.
- Consider inclusion of additional outcomes and indicators relating to freight movement.
- Consideration be given to the issues and themes identified under 4.2 of this report during development of the draft RLTS.

### 5. Communication

The feedback from the Strategic Options consultation process together with the RLTC response and selection of a preferred strategic option is to be communicated by a letter sent to all submitters enclosing the summary of submissions, officer's reports, and associated RLTC resolutions.

In due course, a draft RLTS will be developed and released for further comment in accordance with the requirements of the Land Transport Act 1998.

### 6. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Notes*** that the feedback generally indicated support for the Advanced Passenger Transport option.
3. ***Instructs*** officers to arrange workshops to allow the Committee to develop a preferred option.

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**Attachment 1:** Analysis of Submissions

**Attachment 2:** MWH Report on Submissions on Strategic Options Consultation Document