Alignment between the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016 and the New Zealand Transport Strategy 2008 and Government Policy Statement on land transport funding 2009

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to assess the alignment between the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) 2007-2016 and the objectives of the New Zealand Transport Strategy 2008 (NZTS) and the impacts described in the Government Policy Statement on land transport funding 2009 (GPS).

2. The RLTS review

The RLTS sets out a long term vision of a sustainable transport system for the region and it contains objectives, policies, outcomes and targets to support progress towards achievement of that vision. The current RLTS 2007–2016 was adopted in July 2007 following a very comprehensive development process that took many years.

The Land Transport Management Act (LTMA) 2003[1] requires that the RLTS be renewed by July 2010 (s176 (1)(b)). Due to the comprehensive nature of the prior review, the current RLTS 2007 – 2016 is considered relatively robust and only minor changes are likely to be necessary to comply with the amended LTMA.

Various Corridor and Implementation Plans sit underneath the RLTS and detail the implementation programmes which are supported by all responsible parties. These Plans are updated on a rolling basis. Some of these Plans are currently in a review process, others have been recently updated and others predate the current 2007 – 2016 RLTS.

The Corridor Plans include:

- Wairarapa Corridor Plan (December 2003) – currently under review
- Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan (October 2008)
- Western Corridor Plan (April 2006)
- Hutt Corridor Plan (December 2003) – currently under review

[1] As amended by the Land Transport Management Amendment Act 2008.

The Implementation Plans include:

- Regional Road Safety Plan (October 2009)
- Regional Travel Demand Management Plan (December 2009)
- Regional Cycling Plan (December 2008)
- Regional Walking Plan (October 2008)
- Regional Passenger Transport Plan 2007 – 2016 (August 2007) – currently under review
- Regional Freight Plan (July 2007)

The above Plans will all be referred to in the draft RLTS to be released for public consultation in early 2010. The older Plans will be reviewed and upgraded to implement the new RLTS that results from this review process.

3. New Zealand Transport Strategy 2008

The NZTS was updated in 2008 to provide long term direction for transport out to 2040.

It sets the framework for the activities of Crown agencies and provides guidance to local authorities as well as for private investment. The NZTS is not a statutory document as it is not specifically a 'national land transport strategy' as set out the amended LTMA 2003 (section 66).

The vision of the NZTS is:

"People and freight in New Zealand have access to an affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable transport system."

The NZTS retains the 5 objectives from the 2002 version. These objectives are then supported by long-term targets – most of which extend to 2040. The objectives and targets are:

1. Ensuring environmental sustainability
    - halve per capita greenhouse gas emissions from domestic transport by 2040
    - increase coastal shipping's share of inter-regional freight to 30% of tonne-kilometres by 2040
    - increase rail's share of freight to 25% of tonne-kilometres by 2040
    - become one of the first countries in the world to widely use electric vehicles
    - reduce the kilometres travelled by single occupancy vehicles, in major urban areas on weekdays, by 10% per capita by 2015 compared to 2007
    - reduce the rated carbon dioxide emissions per kilometre of combined average new and used vehicles entering the light vehicle fleet to 170 grams CO2 per kilometre by 2015, with a corresponding reduction in average fuel used per kilometre
    - increase the area of Crown transport land covered with indigenous vegetation.

2. Assisting economic development
    - improve reliability of journey times for identified critical routes
    - reduce average journey times for identified critical routes.

3. Assisting safety and personal security
    - reduce road deaths to no more than 200 per annum by 2040
    - reduce serious injuries on roads to no more than 1,500 per annum by 2040.

4. Improving access and mobility
    - increase use of public transport to 7% of all trips by 2040 (from 111 million boarding in 2006/7 to more than 525 million boarding in 2040)
    - increase walking, cycling and other active modes to 30% of total trips in urban areas by 2040.

5. Protecting and promoting public health
    - reduce the number of people exposed to health-endangering noise levels from transport
    - reduce the number of people exposed to health-endangering concentrations of air pollution in locations where the impact of transport emissions is significant.

The NZTS identifies seven key components for increased priority. These are:

- integrated planning
- making the best of existing networks and infrastructure
- investing in critical infrastructure and the transport sector workforce
- increasing the availability and use of public transport, cycling, walking and other shared and active modes
- considering options for charging that will generate revenue for investment in transport infrastructure and services
- using new technologies and fuels
- maintaining and improving international links.

4. Government Policy Statement

The current GPS was issued by the Ministry of Transport in May 2009, replacing the GPS released by the prior government.

It covers the period 2009/10 to 2014/15 and more indicatively for a further 4 years to 2018/19. The purpose of a GPS is to outline the funding and investment priorities of central government that will direct the development of the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP).

The NLTP was released 27 August 2009 and allocates around $621 million to the Wellington region over the next three years.

The previous GPS included short to medium terms targets for the land transport network which the key outcomes of the RLTS were well aligned with. The new GPS no longer has *targets* and instead it sets out short to medium term *impacts* that the government wants to achieve through the NLTP.

It is therefore necessary to test the alignment between the new GPS impacts and the key RLTS outcomes (which were used as the basis for prioritisation) to be satisfied that the RLTS is aligned to the new GPS.

GPS Impacts that contribute to economic growth and productivity

- Improvements in the provision of infrastructure and services that enhance transport efficiency and lower the cost of transportation through:
    - improvements in journey time reliability
    - easing of severe congestion
    - more efficient freight supply chains
    - better use of existing transport capacity.
- Better access to markets, employment and areas that contribute to economic growth.
- A secure and resilient transport network.

Other impacts

- Reductions in deaths and serious injuries as a result of road crashes.
- More transport choices, particularly for those with limited access to a car where appropriate.
- Reductions in adverse environmental effects from land transport.
- Contributions to positive health outcomes.

5. Legislative alignment

This section details the alignment between the 2007-16 RLTS and the NZTS 2008 and the GPS 2009.

The RLTS is required to be consistent with a 'national land transport strategy' (LTMA 75(a)(iii)(A)). While the NZTS is technically not this statutory document, it performs a similar role and will thus be assessed as if it was the statutory document.

The LTMA requirement is for a RLTS to 'take into account' the relevant GPS (LTMA (b)(i)).

5.1 New Zealand Transport Strategy 2008

The vision of the current RLTS is:

"To deliver, through significant achievements in each period, 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 vision is consistent with the NZTS 2008 vision. Both cover themes of assisting people and freight, being affordable (economically sustainable), integrated, safe and responsive (socially sustainable) and environmental sustainability.

The objectives of the RLTS and NZTS largely mirror each other and are thus consistent. The RLTS also contains an affordability objective which adds to consistency with the NZTS vision.

The objectives of the RLTS are:

1. Assist economic and regional development
2. Assist safety and personal security
3. Improve access, mobility and reliability
4. Protect and promote public health
5. Ensure environmental sustainability
6. Ensure that the Regional Transport Programme is affordable for the regional community.

RLTS Objective 6 will be amended to "Regional Land Transport Programme" to be consistent with the language of the amended LTMA 2003. No other changes to the objectives are proposed during this review.

The NZTS targets have not been 'regionalised', making it difficult to gauge the expected contribution by the Wellington region to the achievement of those targets, as well as difficult to align the RLTS targets along desired national-level outcomes.

The timeframes of the targets are also very different. The NZTS targets go out to 2040 while the RLTS target are to 2016. There are also differences in measurements between comparable NZTS and RLTS targets.

Work done in the *RLTS Target Assessment* paper for this review has determined that there is overall consistency between the intended effects of the NZTS and RLTS targets. There are no significant gaps between measures of the RLTS targets in Greater Wellington's Annual Monitoring Report and the NZTS targets in the Ministry of Transport's Transport Monitoring Indicator Framework.[2]

The RLTS also contains several policies that are consistent with the seven NZTS key components for increased priority.

Integrated Planning

The RLTS contains several policies in section 8.5 that are linked with the Wellington Regional Strategy, Regional Policy Statement as well as various other policies for land use and transport integration.

Making the best of existing networks and infrastructure

The RLTS Policy 8.1.c is to 'ensure that the level of service of the regional transport network is continuously monitored and, where necessary, improved. Policy 8.1.d is to 'ensure best use is made of network management techniques to optimise the performance of the transport network'. These management techniques include, but are not limited to, advanced traffic management systems, advanced traveller information systems, and High Occupancy Vehicle lanes.

[2] Available at: http://www.transport.govt.nz/ourwork/TMIF/.

Investing in critical infrastructure and the transport sector workforce

The RLTS contains many policies in the Network Management section that guide investment in infrastructure and another section for 'Programme prioritisation and funding' polices (section 8.8) that take into account critical areas for investment.

Increasing the availability and use of public transport, cycling, walking and other shared and active modes

Several policies in the 'Network management' section seek optimal use of the rail network, trolley buses in Wellington City, and other bus services. Walking and cycling modes also have policies in this section, as well as section 8.2 'Travel demand management' polices. Sitting alongside the RLTS is the Passenger Transport Plan, and Regional Walking, Cycling, and Travel Demand Management Plans.

Considering options for charging that will generate revenue for investment in transport infrastructure and services

RLTS Policy 8.6.b supports 'investigation of mechanisms for addressing funding gaps'. These mechanisms may include local fuel taxes, tolling new roads, road pricing existing roads, public/private partnerships, and development and financial contributions

Using new technologies and fuels

RLTS Policy 8.4.d seeks to 'support government investigations into alternative fuel options and eco-efficient vehicles'.

Maintaining and improving international links

The two main international links in the Wellington Region are Wellington International Airport and CentrePort. RLTS Policy 8.1.b seeks to 'ensure the regional transport network provides effective connections to Wellington's Port and International Airport.'

5.2 Government Policy Statement on land transport funding 2009

The table below details the alignment between RLTS key outcomes and GPS short to medium term impacts.

RLTS Key Objectives / GPS Impacts	Increased peak period passenger transport mode share	Increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists	Reduced greenhouse gas emissions	Reduced severer road congestion	Improved regional road safety	Improved land use and transport integration	Improved regional freight efficiency
Improvements in journey time reliability	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Easing of severe congestion	✓	✓		✓			
More efficient freight supply chains				✓			✓
Better use of existing transport capacity	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Better access to markets, employment and areas that contribute to economic growth	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
A secure and resilient transport network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reductions in deaths and serious injuries as a result of road crashes	✓	✓	✓		✓		
More transport choices, particularly for those with limited access to a car where appropriate	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Reductions in adverse environmental effects from land transport	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Contributions to positive health outcomes	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Table 1: Alignment between RLTS Key Outcomes and GPS Impacts sought.

Increased peak period passenger transport mode share

Making improvements to the PT network in the Wellington region that increase patronage and mode share contributes to improving journey time reliability for PT users, and for road users through its contribution to reducing traffic congestion.

PT vehicles make best use of existing transport capacity by carrying large numbers of people travelling along common routes more efficiently than private cars. This is particularly the case on key commuter routes where good access to employment and areas of economic exchange is vital.

Improving our PT system will mean more people have better transport options and choices, therefore contributing towards a more resilient transport network. PT is a safer and more environmentally sustainable mode of transport than the private car. PT use often involves more walking trips at either end of the journey and contributes to positive health outcomes.

Increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists

Improving walking and cycling networks in the Wellington region contributes to reducing traffic congestion, particularly in the Wellington City CBD. Walking and cycling trips can make efficient use of existing networks as these modes occupy less space.

Improving our walking and cycling networks will mean more people have better transport options and choices, therefore contributing towards a more resilient transport network. Walking is a relatively safe mode and more people using this mode means reduced traffic volumes. Investment in cycling infrastructure is vital to address safety issues for this mode.

Walking and cycling are more environmentally sustainable modes of transport than the private car, particularly single occupancy vehicles, and contribute to positive health outcomes.

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transport network of the Wellington region contributes to a more secure and resilient transport system by minimising the sector's contributions to climate destabilising emissions that lead to sea level rise, increased storminess, landslips and washouts.

Personal safety and environmental quality is also improved by reduced risk to climate change and related effects. Methods of reducing greenhouse gas emissions that involve mode shift also contribute to a more resilient transport system for the reasons described in the sections above as well as expanded transport choices.

Positive health benefits arise from lower exposure to airborne irritants, pollutants, as well as from reduced risk from heat and weather related ailments.

Reduced severe road congestion

Reducing congestion through improving the strategic road network in the Wellington region contributes to improving journey time reliability. The primary purpose of the strategic road network is to provide good access to employment and areas of economic exchange, including key freight destinations.

New strategic road links provide alternative routes that contribute towards a more resilient transport network. Improving the strategic roading network by upgrading intersections to match adjacent capacity and implementing TDM measures (such as Advanced Traffic Management, Information Systems and tidal lanes) makes best use of existing infrastructure.

Improved regional road safety

Safety improvements and programmes stemming from this RLTS key outcome are aimed at reducing deaths and serious injuries when using the transport system. As a consequence of fewer incidents, the network is more resilient and reliable.

Improved road safety reduces the social cost to communities and on the health system.

Improved land use and transport integration

Ensuring that the outcomes and policies of the RLTS are consistent with relevant planning undertaken through the local council District Plans and urban development strategies, the Wellington Regional Strategy as well as the Regional Policy Statement contributes to more efficient use of existing transport capacity, better access to future growth and employment areas, and improved network resilience.

Better transport choices as a result of improved integration result in reduced environmental impacts and in positive health outcomes.

Improved regional freight efficiency

Improving the efficiency of freight movements through the Wellington region leads directly to more efficient supply chains. Increased road capacity and freight shift onto rail and improved access to Wellington's Port and the Wellington International Airport increase access to markets.

Improving rail connections in the Wellington region contributes to improving journey time reliability for rail freight and supply chain efficiency. Removing rail bottlenecks makes best use of existing infrastructure by matching the capacity of the adjacent road network. Any mode shift from road to rail freight is consistent with a more resilient transport network, improved safety and reduced environmental impacts.

Improving access to Wellington's Port by all freight modes is vital to support economic growth and access to markets.

6. Conclusions

The RLTS vision, objectives, and policies are well aligned with the NZTS 2008. The consistency between RLTS and NZTS targets are the subject of another paper which demonstrates overall good consistency. The policies listed in the RLTS are also consistent with the identified NZTS key components for increased priority.

The RLTS key outcomes are overall well aligned with the desired impacts of the GPS 2009.