

Alignment between the proposed Regional Policy Statement and the Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016

August 2009

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to assess the alignment between the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) 2007-2016 and the relevant policies and methods of the proposed Regional Policy Statement 2009 (RPS).

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) 2003¹ 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)
- 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. The proposed Regional Policy Statement

The Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991 requires every regional council to prepare a regional policy statement designed to promote sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

A regional policy statement provides an overview of the resource management issues for the region and outlines the policies and methods required to achieve the integrated management of the region's natural and physical resources.

The RMA requires a full review be undertaken of a regional policy statement every 10 years after it becomes operative. The first Wellington Regional Policy Statement was made operative in May 1995. Greater Wellington's review process commenced with a State of the Environment Report in December 2005 and has led to development of the current proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region 2009 (RPS).

The proposed RPS is currently going through the public consultation phase and still needs to go through any Environment Court appeals before it becomes fully operative. This assessment includes the amendments made in the Staff Report as a result of the public submissions process.

The proposed RPS identifies 11 regionally significant resource management issues and contains 30 Objectives to address those issues. There are 69 Policies and 55 Methods described to achieve those Objectives.

The RLTS 2007 – 2016 influenced the development of the proposed RPS, and therefore has been incorporated into the policies of the proposed RPS to varying degrees.

The issues relevant to this RLTS review are air quality, energy, infrastructure, and regional form. The relevance of the RLTS in contributing to these issues varies from being the primary means of achievement to only being indirectly involved.

Where the RLTS and the proposed RPS need to be the most closely aligned is where implementation of the RLTS is identified as the primary means of achieving the RPS objective (Method 3, p. 76). This method is used to implement three policies in the proposed RPS:

- Policy 8
- Policy 9
- Policy 32.

These three policies contribute to achieving two proposed RPS objectives: 9 and 21. Objective 9 is intended to encourage the region to meet its energy needs in ways that improve efficiency, diversify energy supply, reduce dependency on fossil fuels, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Objective 21 seeks to encourage a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form that has an integrated, safe and responsive transport network.

The RLTS is also highly relevant to five proposed RPS policies:

- Policy 6
- Policy 7
- Policy 38
- Policy 56.

Other relevant issues, objectives and policies to the RLTS are:

- Issue: Air Quality
- Objective 15
- Policy 30
- Policy 53
- Policy 54
- Policy 55
- Policy 57.

4. Alignment between the Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016 and the proposed Regional Policy Statement

This section identifies the proposed RPS issues, objectives and policies relevant to the RLTS and describes the alignment between these and the current RLTS 2007–2016.

It is organised into subsections based on the level of influence of the RLTS.

4.1 RPS policies that the RLTS implements

Implementation of the RLTS is Method 3 of the proposed RPS. Method 3 relates to three proposed RPS policies.

RPS Policy 8	Reducing the use and consumption of non-renewable transport fuels and carbon dioxide emissions from transportation
	The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy shall include objectives and policies that promote a reduction in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the consumption of non-renewable transport fuels; and• the emission of carbon dioxide from transportation

The RLTS objective ‘ensure environmental sustainability’ has a direct fit with this RPS policy. Key RLTS outcomes that contribute to this objective are:

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

This RLTS objective is also supported by several ‘related outcomes’ (RLTS Table 1, p. 25) and various network management, travel demand management, environment and public health, and planning and integration policies (RLTS Table 4, p. 33-37).

Four policies that directly contribute to RPS Policy 8 are:

- Support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions arising from the operation of the regional transport network (8.4(c))
- Support government investigation into alternative fuel options and eco-efficient vehicles (8.4(d))
- Ensure the transport network is developed in a way that minimises the use of non-renewable resources (8.4(e))
- Support the use of transport modes that are not dependent on fossil fuels, including active transport modes (8.4(f)).

RPS Policy 9	Promoting travel demand management
	District Plans and the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy shall include policies to promote travel demand management mechanisms that reduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use and consumption of non-renewable transport fuels; and • carbon dioxide emissions from transportation

The RLTS contains 9 policies for travel demand management. The ones that relate the closest to Policy 9 of the proposed RPS are:

- Support reduced reliance on private motor vehicles, particularly single occupancy vehicle use (excluding motorcycles) and use for short trips (8.2(b))
- Support the increased use of passenger transport (8.2(c))
- Support the uptake of cycling and pedestrian travel, particularly for short trips (8.2(d))
- Encourage appropriately located land development and ensure integration with transport infrastructure (8.2(e))
- Support start-up funding for viable ‘alternative to road’ initiatives (8.2(h)).

Underneath the RLTS sits the Regional Travel Demand Management Plan which details activities for improving regional travel efficiency. The Regional Walking and Cycling Plans, as well as the Regional Passenger Transport Plan also contribute to the proposed RPS Policy 9 by encouraging greater mode share for walking, cycling, bus and rail.

RPS Policy 32	Supporting a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form
	The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy shall contain objectives and policies that support the maintenance and enhancement of a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form

The RLTS objectives that most closely relate to this proposed RPS Policy are ‘Assist economic and regional development’, ‘Improve access, mobility and reliability’, and ‘Ensure environmental sustainability’. A key outcome of the RLTS is ‘improved land use and transport integration’.

There are several policies that contribute to this outcome:

- Ensure location and design of new transport infrastructure enhance access, minimise community severance issues and take account of the special values of the local area including, but not limited to, environmental matters and community concerns (8.4(h))
- Support the growth and land use aspirations of the Wellington Regional Strategy and the Regional Policy Statement, particularly in relation to compact regional form, supporting a strong Wellington City CBD and regional centres, and densification around passenger transport nodes (8.5(a))
- Ensure new transport infrastructure is consistent with the region’s urban design principles as set out in the Regional Policy Statement (8.5(b))

- Support land use principles that minimise dependence on the private car (8.5(c))
- Ensure the current and future regional transport network is identified and protected in territorial authority planning documents (8.5(d))
- Support better integration of transport and land use planning by identifying roading hierarchies and advocating for appropriate access controls in district plans (8.5(e))
- Ensure that land use and transport decisions take into account the diverse transport needs and views of the region’s community (8.5(f)).

The Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan was also developed incorporating Wellington City Council’s Urban Development Strategy and the Wellington Regional Strategy, which aims to ensure most growth is concentrated along a growth spine from Johnsonville, through the CBD and Newtown to Kilbirnie.

4.2 Proposed RPS policies that are highly relevant to the RLTS

The following proposed RPS policies concern other district and regional plans. While they do not relate directly to the RLTS, the RLTS does contribute substantially to these RPS policies.

<p>RPS Policy 6</p>	<p>Recognising the benefits from renewable energy and regionally significant infrastructure</p> <p>District and regional plans shall include policies that recognise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits of regionally significant infrastructure including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and goods can travel to, from and around the efficiently; • Public health and safety is maintained through the provision of essential services, supply of potable water and the collection and transfer of sewage; • People have access to energy so as to meet their needs; and • People have access to telecommunication services. b) The social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits of energy generated from renewable energy resources including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security of supply and diversification of our energy sources; • Reducing dependency on imported and non-renewable energy resources; and • Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
<p>RPS Policy 7</p>	<p>Protecting regionally significant infrastructure</p> <p>District and regional plans shall include policies and rules that protect regionally significant infrastructure from incompatible subdivision, use and development occurring under, over, or adjacent to the infrastructure.</p>

<p>RPS Policy 38</p>	<p>Recognising the benefits from renewable energy and regionally significant infrastructure</p> <p>When considering an application for a resource consent, notice of requirement, or a change, variation or replacement to a district or regional plan, particular regard shall be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits of regionally significant infrastructure and/or energy generated from renewable energy resources; and • Protecting regionally significant infrastructure from incompatible subdivision, use and development occurring under, over, or adjacent to the infrastructure; and • The need for renewable electricity generation facilities to locate where the renewable energy resources exist; and • The nationally significant wind and marine renewable energy resources within the region.
<p>RPS Policy 56</p>	<p>Integrating land use and transportation</p> <p>When considering an application for a resource consent, notice of requirement, or a change, variation or replacement to a district plan, for subdivision, use or development, particular regard shall be given to the following matters, in making progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether traffic generated by the proposed development can be accommodated within the existing transport network and the impacts on the efficiency, reliability or safety of the network; • Connectivity with, or provision of access to, public services or activities, key centres of employment activity or retail activity, open spaces or recreational areas; • Whether there is good access to the strategic public transport network; • Provision of safe and attractive environments for walking and cycling; and • Whether new, or upgrades to existing, transport network infrastructure have been appropriately recognised and provided for.

Regionally significant infrastructure is defined in the proposed RPS as including:

- The Strategic Transport Network, as defined in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016
- Wellington City bus terminal and Wellington Railway Station terminus
- Wellington International Airport
- Commercial Port Areas within Wellington Harbour (p. 174).

The RLTS describes the strategic transport network as made up of the region’s key railway lines, state highways, key terminals providing links to other transport networks and those major local roads serving an arterial purpose (RLTS, p. 61-63). The RLTS recognises the important strategic role that this network plays in providing regionally and nationally significant access.

All of the RLTS objectives, outcomes and policies relate to this strategic network.

As detailed in the prior section for the proposed RPS Policy 32 – the RLTS contains several policies that seek to contribute to improved planning and integration with other relevant local government planning processes and strategies.

4.3 Other relevant proposed RPS issues, objectives and policies

The following only indirectly relate to the RLTS or are connected to other proposed RPS policies that were discussed above.

Air quality is recognised in the proposed RPS as a regionally significant resource management issue.

Although transport emissions are not mentioned as having an impact on the air quality of the Wellington region, the RLTS contains a policy (8.4(b)) which states, ‘support continuous improvement in air quality through reduction in harmful vehicle emissions’. Supporting an uptake in mode share for walking (8.1(p)), cycling (8.1(o)) and public transport (8.1(f – l)) will have positive effects for air quality. Extending electrification of the rail lines (8.1(i)) and supporting the electric trolley buses in Wellington City (8.1(m)) will also play a part in improving the air quality throughout the Wellington Region.

RPS Objective 15: Historic heritage is identified and protected from inappropriate modification, use and development

Transport infrastructure development can have an effect on historic heritage sites when the site is sought for project construction. The RLTS policy 8.4(g) seeks to ensure that the location and design of new transport infrastructure takes account of the special values of the local area.

RPS Policy 30	Identifying and promoting higher density and mixed use development
	<p>District plans shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key centres suitable for higher density and/or mixed use development; • Identify locations, with good access to the strategic public transport network, suitable for higher density and/or mixed use development; and • Include policies, rules and/or methods that encourage higher density and/or mixed use development in and around these centres and locations, <p>so as to maintain and enhance a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form.</p>
RPS Policy 53	Achieving the region’s urban design principles
	<p>When considering an application for a notice of requirement, or a change, variation or replacement to a district or regional plan, for development, particular regard shall be given to achieving the region’s urban design principles.</p>

<p>RPS Policy 54</p>	<p>Maintaining a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form</p> <p>When considering an application for a resource consent, or a change, variation or replacement to a district plan for urban development beyond the region’s urban areas (as at March 2009), particular regard shall be given to whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed development is the most appropriate option to achieve Objective 21; • The proposed development is consistent with the Council’s growth and/or development framework or strategy that describes where and how future urban development should occur in that district; and/or • A structure plan has been prepared.
<p>RPS Policy 55</p>	<p>Managing development in rural areas</p> <p>When considering an application for a resource consent or a change, variation or replacement to a district plan, in rural areas (as at March 2009), particular regard shall be given to whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal will result in a loss of productivity of the rural areas, including cumulative impacts that would reduce the potential for food and other primary production; • The proposal will reduce aesthetic and open space values in rural areas between and around settlements; • The proposals location, design or density will minimise demand for non-renewable energy resources; and • The proposal is consistent with the relevant city or district council growth and/or development framework or strategy that addresses future rural development; or • In the absence of such a framework or strategy, the proposal will increase pressure for public services and infrastructure beyond existing infrastructure capacity.
<p>RPS Policy 57</p>	<p>Co-ordinating land use with development and operation of infrastructure</p> <p>When considering an application for a resource consent, notice of requirement, or a plan change, variation or replacement to a district plan for subdivision, use or development, particular regard shall be given to whether the proposed subdivision, use or development is located and sequenced to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make efficient use of existing infrastructure capacity; and/or • Coordinate with the development and operation of new infrastructure.

The purpose of these proposed RPS policies is to guide district and regional plans in land use and development.

The RLTS plays a role in supporting these proposed policies in ways that reduces the need to travel, reduce travel distances and improves choices in travel for commuters. For detail on how the RLTS relates to these proposed RPS policies see the section on the RPS Policy 32 and 56.

Greater Wellington is a signatory of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, which influenced the development of both the RLTS 2007-2016 and the proposed RPS 2009.

5. Conclusion

The Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016 is generally consistent with the proposed Regional Policy Statement of the Wellington Region 2009.

Changes made to the proposed RPS through public consultation did not affect the overall consistency between the two documents. It is unlikely that Environment Court decisions would materially affect the consistency as well.

6. References

Wellington Regional Council (March 2009) *Proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region 2009*. Wellington.

Wellington Regional Council (October 2008) *Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan*. Wellington.

Wellington Regional Council (July 2007) *Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016*. Wellington.