



WELLINGTON REGIONAL STRATEGY OFFICE



ANNUAL REPORT 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

The Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) was developed by the nine local authorities in the region, working in tandem with central government and business, education, research and voluntary sector interests. It was fully adopted in May 2007.

It is a sustainable economic growth strategy and contains 68 initiatives to realise our economic potential.

The Wellington Regional Strategy Office was set up in 2008 to coordinate the project streams of the Strategy and in particular to drive the “good regional form” initiatives in conjunction with the councils of the region. These address such issues as transport, availability of industrial land, affordable housing, urban design and open spaces, which are all the things that contribute to our quality of life.

Grow Wellington is the economic development agency charged with the task of implementing the economic initiatives of the strategy, particularly those relating to investing in growth of the regional economy through exports.

One of the key projects being undertaken to measure the success of the Strategy and the genuine progress of our region is to develop a Genuine Progress Index (GPI) for the Wellington region. This is a tool of analysis that properly values social, economic and environmental assets, carefully appraising both costs and benefits and balancing them against one another.

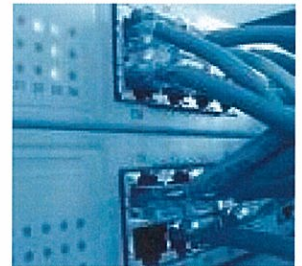
2. PROJECT: BROADBAND

The Wellington Regional Strategy identifies broadband as a top priority, and this has flowed through to the Grow Wellington Statement of Intent. Broadly this means that Grow Wellington will focus on “demand” aspects, such as ensuring Wellington businesses realise the potential for broadband to enhance their businesses. Councils themselves will address the “supply” side, i.e. the infrastructure planning and possible provision of some aspects like urban fibre networks. This approach is consistent with the government’s Digital Strategy which separates “content” and “confidence” (in use) from “connection”.

A working party called the Broadband Operating Group (BOG) has been established to lead the Wellington Regional Broadband project.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

- To enable collaborative work across the region in the area of Broadband and to assist in the provision of fast and affordable broadband for the region.
- To develop a regional action plan for Broadband and to promote greater investment in Broadband in the region.
- To access funding in a coordinated manner taking into account the interests of the region as a whole.



WHO'S INVOLVED

A working group called the Broadband Operating Group (BOG) was established with a cross section of representatives from each of the TAs, central government and district health boards across the Wellington region with interests in the telecommunications sector. There are core SORT (Senior Offices Resource Team) members within the group. It is intended that reporting on this work will be made through SORT, CEG (Chief Executives Group) and WRS (Wellington Regional Strategy) Committee.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The Broadband Operating Group was established in June. A briefing on Broadband was given to the Wellington Regional Strategy Committee on 4 June to outline the issues around broadband for the Wellington region and to explain the need for a regional approach to seeking any government funding. The Broadband Operating Group has submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to the government’s Broadband Investment Fund (BIF). The project will deliver new or upgraded broadband access capability through a fibre network designed to provide passive fibre connections to every urban MUSH entity in the region (Municipal authorities, Universities, Schools and Hospitals). The bid is a combination of urban and rural bids. It is envisaged that a joint venture company will be established between telcos and councils.

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

Jul 08	Review existing telecommunications policy provisions and the potential for future provisions
30 Aug 08	Develop an Expression of Interest for the Broadband Investment Fund (BIF)
Oct 08	MED to announce whether Wellington EOI bid successful
Oct - Dec 08	Investigate a regional funding management framework for accessing broadband funding
Nov 08	Workshop with Mayors & CEs on broadband for region
Dec 08	Submit a final regional broadband bid
Feb 09	Council sign-off and full application submitted

3. PROJECT: GENUINE PROGRESS INDEX (GPI)

The Wellington Regional Strategy is to be monitored utilising a Genuine Progress Index (GPI). A GPI is a more holistic measure of economic development that provides a fully costed analysis of economic growth in relation to what's happening for other aspects of a nation or region. It can assess the economic, environmental, social and cultural dimensions of the region to determine an overall picture of the region's genuine progress and well-being. A GPI is a long-term monitoring and policy tool which can add value to analyses of the WRS and decisions applying to the region.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

- To develop a GPI to monitor the WRS and measure the economic, social, environmental and cultural progress of the Wellington region. This is a phased process that involves :
 - developing a GPI framework
 - appointing an expert panel to review framework
 - developing a set of accounts using the full cost-accounting approach
- To communicate the value of the Wellington GPI



WHO'S INVOLVED?

The GPI Working Group is leading the GPI project. It comprises representatives from each of the TLAs. Some of the members are responsible for undertaking the LTCCP monitoring work within councils.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The GPI working group has assessed many GPI frameworks being utilised around the world and has determined that the key indicators for the Wellington region GPI will be based on the Community Outcomes set out on Page 2 of the WRS. This work will be complementary to existing indicators being utilised by councils throughout the region for their LTCCP monitoring work. It has determined a three-phase process for the GPI.

A national GPI Forum was held on 19 June with 45 attendees from central and local government, universities and independent researchers. A follow-up forum was held on 4 September.

A GPI workshop was held for the WRS Committee, Ara Tahi and the Regional Sustainability Committee.

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

Jul- Aug 08	Develop draft GPI framework for the Wellington region
Aug 08	Update to WRS Committee
25 Aug 08	Workshop on Wellington region GPI framework with WRS Committee, Ara Tahi & Regional Sustainability Committee
Sept 08	Workshop on Wellington region GPI framework with SORT
Oct 08	WRS Committee approval of Draft GPI framework
Oct 08	Investigation of data collection
Nov 08	Workshop with WRS Committee
Dec 08	WRS Committee sign off Phase I GPI Framework
Jan- Apr 09	Collection of data
Apr-May 09	Process decided on for development of accounts for full cost-accounting

4. PROJECT: OPEN SPACES

The Wellington Regional Strategy recognises that quality open spaces can be fundamental to world-class cities and regions. Coordinating the management and integration of the region's open space network can improve the economic benefit of these assets while balancing recreational values with ecological values.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The purpose of this workstream is:

- To determine where there are further opportunities for improved integration of public open space.
- To assess the range of options to enhance the open space network through acquisition and management scenarios.
- To provide recommendations for a way forward via a regionally agreed action plan.



WHO'S INVOLVED?

A working group has been set up comprising representatives from the territorial authorities, Greater Wellington, Department of Conservation (DoC) and QEII National Trust.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The working group is looking at a number of areas including agreement on the definition for open space; work streams around open space e.g. recreation, biodiversity; what constitutes 'adequate' provision of open space; and the identification and options to enhance the region's open space network. A workshop with the working group was held on 31 July with the purpose of identifying the opportunities and gaps on a region wide basis.

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

July 08	Mapping and data gathering
Aug 08	Mapping and analysis of opportunity areas
Aug/ Sept 08	Analysis of options for acquiring/managing new open spaces
Mar 09	Draft action plan
Jun 09	Sign off and endorsement from WRS Committee
Jul 09	Printing and distribution

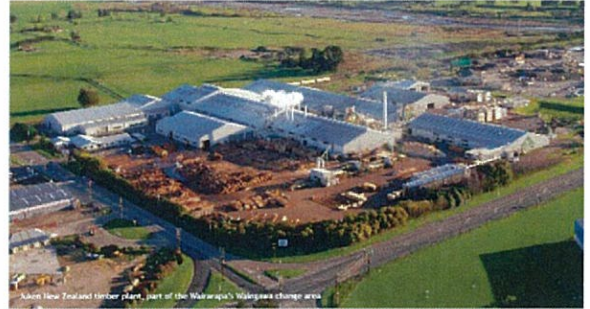
5. PROJECT: INDUSTRIAL LAND

The Wellington Regional Strategy recognises the importance of industrial land to the future economic development of the region. Within the region, prime industrial land prices are rising, partly as a result of competition with commercial and residential demands. Whilst there does appear, at present, to be an adequate supply of industrial land across the region it is not understood how this situation may change in the future and what the impact of this might be. Once industrial land changes use it will very rarely be available for industrial use again.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this workstream is to:

- Ensure that into the future there is an adequate and adaptable supply of land for industrial use in the region
- Achieve more employment close to where people live thus reducing the pressure on transport and strengthening each community
- Understand the impact for the region of the price of prime industrial land continuing to rise (as a result of competition with commercial and residential demands)
- Understand how to utilize the current supply of industrial land (utilised and available) in a way that achieves the wider sustainable economic growth outcomes of the WRS
- Look in more detail at the demand and supply of industrial land to provide accurate information on strategic locations for business investors
- Enable the region to identify if and where action needs to be taken because the market is not delivering and to ensure that employment growth occurs where it will provide most regional benefit.



WHO'S INVOLVED?

Hutt City Council is leading this project in conjunction with the TLAs of the region. Additional advice will be sought from the Chamber of Commerce and Employment and Manufacturers Association (EMA Central).

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

A SORT workshop was held on Monday 14 July. The aim of the workshop was to provide briefings to planners within councils on each of the projects with a view to coming to common agreements for regional planning approaches. A report has been produced on the current status of industrial land in the region. A survey of relevant businesses is about to be undertaken to understand future requirements for industrial land

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

Aug 08	Property Economics report commissioned
Nov 08	Report completed on assessments of industrial land
Dec 08	Business survey established
Dec 08	Results on scenarios analysis
Feb 09	Survey of employment locations
Jun 09	Final report to WRS Committee (pulling all factors together)

6. PROJECT: INTENSIFICATION & INFILL HOUSING

The WRS identifies that compact sustainable regional form is fundamental to a successful region. There are opportunities for intensification, particularly around transport points throughout the region. The strategy also identifies that it is important to manage areas of infill carefully to protect the character of low-density suburbs. The WRS identifies a number of options for intensification/infill.

PURPOSE:

- Map and describe existing approaches to intensification and infill housing
- Develop a best practice guide including:
 - Principles for intensification
 - Methods for determining areas for intensification and infill housing
 - Definitions and standardisation of terms
 - A publication illustrating density
- Disseminate and circulate information



WHO'S INVOLVED?

Wellington City Council is leading this project in conjunction with all TA's across the region as well as Greater Wellington.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

A SORT workshop was held on Monday 14 July. The aim of the workshop was to provide briefings to planners and urban designers within councils on the project, with a view to coming to common agreements for regional planning approaches/ best practice.

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

Jul 08	Mapping and data gathering
Dec 08	Hold forum to determine work TAs doing in this area and significance to WRS principles and indicate examples of best practice

7. PROJECT: CENTRES/BIG BOX RETAIL

The WRS identifies the Wellington CBD and the regional centres as the engine rooms of economic development. It recommends an overall vision for the region's centres which includes improving our information about what is happening in these centres and developing regionally consistent principles for managing big box retailing to minimize their potential to erode consolidation and centre development strategies.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this work-stream is:

- To provide clear guidance on how centres should be developed and managed in the future.
- To better understand the multiple functions of centres and develop an integrated planning approach.
- To address the current issues in the region's centres and assist them to develop and mature.
- To develop consistent management approaches to controlling the location of large-format retail.
- To provide guidance for the Intensification Action Areas on the location of future residential growth.
- To develop a framework for centre planning.



WHO'S INVOLVED?

Wellington City Council is leading this project in conjunction with the other TLAs, developers and investors, professional institutes, business groups, Grow Wellington, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and Ministry for the Environment.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

A SORT workshop was held on Monday 14 July. The aim of the workshop was to provide briefings to planners and urban designers within councils on each of the projects, with a view to coming to common agreements for regional planning approaches and best practice.

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

Aug 08	Draft report to CEG
Nov 08	Hold forum to determine work TAs doing in this area and significance to WRS principles and indicate examples of best practice

8. PROJECT: URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOL

Quality urban design is about cities and towns that look good, feel safe and are easy to get around. The WRS recognises that good urban design is a core competent of international competitiveness. All the councils in the region are committed to signing the NZ Urban Design Protocol.

PURPOSE:

To prepare a regional action plan to show how the region will give effect to the protocol.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

The WRS office is leading this project in conjunction with representatives from all the TLAs.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The WRS office continues to work with the two remaining Wairarapa councils in the region yet to sign up to the protocol. This has included the provision of resourcing material and working to set up a governance level workshop to help the councils understand the implications for signing. This is particularly relevant for smaller/rural councils.

A working group of key council staff has been set up in order to put forward recommendations to SORT on urban design matters. A paper on options for an urban design review panel for the Wellington region has been completed.

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

Early Aug 2008	Input to draft implementation plan, communication and mandating processes within individual councils (CEO, other officers, Council) .
19 Aug 2008	Workshop of SORT to inform development and agreement processes for a regional action plan to implement the commitment to the Urban Design Protocol.
Nov 08	Final Draft to CEG
Dec 08	Presentation for WRS Committee



9. PROJECT: WELLINGTON REGIONAL LABOUR MARKET STRATEGY (WRLMS)

The Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) acknowledges and promotes actions supporting a robust and appropriately skilled labour market within the region. Having a well functioning regional labour market is seen as a key underpinning factor in achieving sustained regional prosperity, and contributing to New Zealand's overall economic well-being.

The WRS sets out a suite of actions under the auspices of the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy (WRLMS). These address the breadth of issues affecting labour market performance.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

- To improve productivity levels of the regional labour force and the work place.
- To increase participation rates and opportunities for youth, Maori, Pacific Peoples, older people, migrants and people with disabilities.
- To increase job attraction and retention rates in key regional sectors.
- To meet future labour and skills needs as required.
- To diversify labour market opportunities in the region and support export led growth.
- To encourage sustainable business growth in the region.



WHO'S INVOLVED?

- Collation & dissemination of Labour Market Information & Initiatives, Mike Styles (DoL)
- Labour Force & Skills, Mel Harrington (MSD)
- Promoting Work Choices, Ron Daly
- Business Performance – Productivity, Mr Paul Winter (EMA (Central))
- Integrated labour market responses by tertiary sector, Dr Linda Sissons (WelTec)

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The collation and dissemination of labour market information is about to be set up on the WRS website. Findings of a 'Productivity Study' in the Wellington region have been released. Progress has been made on reforms in the Tertiary sector. Central government's 'Unified Skills Strategy' initiative has been released. A report to the WRS Committee on governance arrangements of the WRLMS indicated that there is no clear governance structure formalised with a mandate and mana for promoting a WRLMS agenda for action. This report outlined the need for the establishment of WRLMS Operational Governance Group to ensure ongoing engagement and ownership of the WRLMS.

10. PROJECT: REFUGEE AND MIGRANT RECRUITMENT

This project was signed in April 2008. It is a Local Industry Partnership Agreement between the Greater Wellington Regional Council and Ministry for Social Development (MSD). The project links both the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy and the Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

The project has two primary programmes, each with specific purposes:

1. The Local and Regional Council Refugee and Migrant Recruitment Programme - JOB CONNECT

- To assist new New Zealanders from refugee and migrant communities who are or are not registered with Work and Income, and/or under-employed into jobs in councils throughout the Wellington region.
- To develop a migrant and refugee skills inventory database

2. The Self-Employment Refugee and Migrant Programme - BUSINESS CONNECT

- To assist new New Zealanders from refugee and migrant communities who are registered with Work and Income and interested in becoming self employed



WHO'S INVOLVED?

JOB CONNECT has identified representatives from each council that include Human Resource managers and personnel, Community Development personnel, Settlement Support co-ordinators, Ministry of Social Development Work and Income work brokers, and Office of Ethnic Affairs intercultural advisors. Service providers are also involved, including Multicultural Learning and Support Services (MCLASS), Job Mentoring Services, and Volunteer Wellington.

BUSINESS CONNECT assisted by MSD Work and Income representatives has identified some people from the migrant community currently in, or with a view to self-employment.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The project launch took place in July 2008. The project also organised a regional workshop to develop a regional local government migrant and refugee recruitment and retention plan of action. The project has engaged with the Change makers Refugee Forum to provide advice on community engagement with refugee communities. Porirua City Council has offered two places on their November 2008 2-day staff orientation for JOB CONNECT project candidates to attend as an information gathering activity to learn more of council units.

FORWARD WORK PLAN:

Oct 08	Agency Inaugural Stakeholder Meeting for Skills Database
	Project Community Engagement with Changemakers Forum with 13 communities
Nov 08	Project Mid point report back event
Mar 09	Project Reflection event