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Committee Regional Transport Committee  
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## Regional Road Safety Update

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the region's road safety situation.

### 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 Committee, at its meeting on 28 October 2008, received the 2007/08 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) on the Regional Land Transport Strategy. Amongst other things the AMR highlighted that 2007 saw 1212 injury crashes, the highest number in ten years. The Committee sought further information on this issue.

A working party of officers from the New Zealand Transport Agency, the Police, Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington was established to oversee a detailed investigation of the issue. The investigation was carried out in two phases. Phase one examined whether the apparent increase in crash numbers over the last ten years was real (and not a consequence of more reporting) and phase two sought to determine causes and areas for remedial action. The final report is included as **Attachment 1**.

### 4. Comment

#### 4.1 Phase one

The investigation primarily looked at injury crash records for the 10-year period 1998 to 2007. Figure 1 shows that fatal and serious crashes are spread throughout the region, generally along main routes and in higher population centres. This illustrates that the problem is everywhere and means it is up to

the region's road controlling authorities to be constantly reviewing and improving the networks which they are responsible for providing.

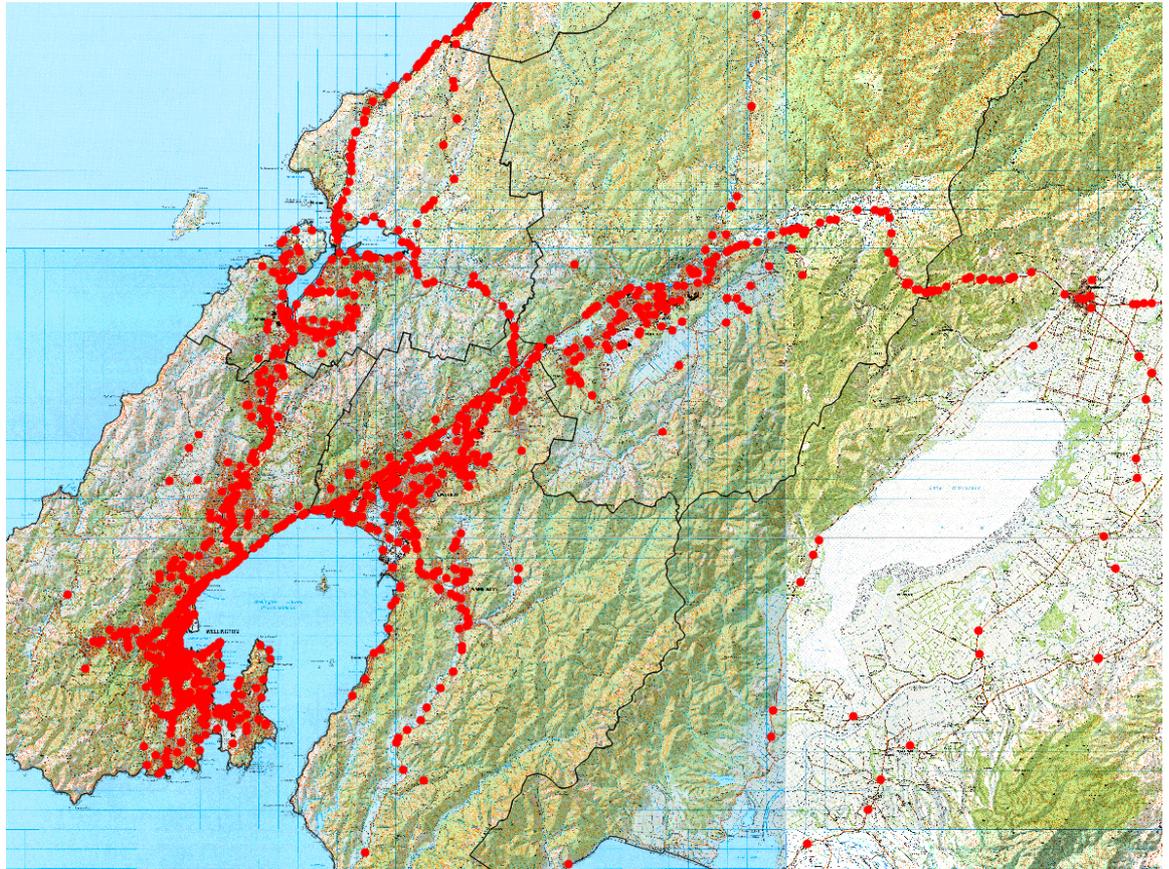


Figure1: All fatal and serious injury crashes in the Wellington Region 1998-2007

Key findings of the phase one investigation are:

1. In 2007 the social cost of road crashes in Wellington was around \$394million.
2. The increasing crash numbers appear to be real and not explained by increased reporting.
3. Crash numbers in the first six months of 2008 tracked up at the same high level as 2007.
4. 63% of injury crashes occurred on local urban roads.
5. Human factors (such as failure to give way, travelling too fast, poor judgement) are the most common causal factors attributed to the reported crashes.
6. The general pattern of causal factors and crash types has remained fairly constant over the last twenty years.

While human factors are the most common cause of crashes, the system in which we operate should be designed to minimise the likelihood of an error

having significant consequences. This can be achieved by better vehicles (eg electronic stability control, airbags) and by providing a road environment that minimises the likelihood of errors occurring and making it as forgiving as possible, should an incident occur (eg median barriers, frangible road side furniture).

## **4.2 Phase two**

The second phase looked at the crash numbers in more detail. It showed that:

- Fatal and serious crashes have increased well above the rates of travel and population, indicating that the region's road safety is getting worse.
- Alcohol related crashes declined markedly during the 1990s but have remained steady for much of the last decade.
- The average age of the vehicle fleet has risen steadily to over 12 years of age, meaning that adoption of safer vehicle technologies is relatively slow.
- Alcohol and speed remain very significant factors in fatal and serious crashes, particularly involving males up to 49 years of age.
- A recent increase in the use of motorcycles correlates to a similar rise in fatal and serious crashes involving motorcyclists.
- The number of fatal and serious crashes involving cyclists in 2007 was a record high.

Overall, the findings of this investigation suggest that a fresh approach to improving road safety is necessary if significant improvements are to be gained. It is clear that a "business as usual" approach is not continuing to improve road safety. It is therefore recommended that the Committee request the Technical Working Group develop a new Regional Road Safety Plan aimed at markedly improving road safety by 2020. The current plan was adopted in August 2004 and is due to be reviewed during the 2009/10 financial year.

## **4.3 National direction**

The current national road safety strategy "Road Safety to 2010" provides a direction for road safety in New Zealand and describes the results the government wants to achieve by 2010. It is understood that a new road safety strategy is being developed by the Ministry of Transport but no information on this review has been published. In due course the Committee may need to develop a submission to a new national proposal.

## **5. Communication**

A media statement will be made when the agenda is released.

## 6. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.
3. **Requests** that the Technical Working Group develops a new Regional Road Safety Plan for the Committee's consideration by December 2009.

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Attachment 1: Greater Wellington Road Safety Investigation 2008