

WELLINGTON REGIONAL STRATEGY OFFICE  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012**



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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



*As a region we compare well with the rest of the country. But the picture is changing and we need to up our game if we are to maintain and improve our edge and relative position in the New Zealand economy. This is the main driver behind the WRS.*

*(Wellington Regional Strategy, 2012)*

It has been a transitional year, with a refreshed and refocused Strategy being signed off by the Committee. The refocused new Strategy reflects a renewed commitment by all the councils in the Wellington region to support, promote and facilitate sustainable economic growth for the region.

The independent review of the WRS undertaken last year by MartinJenkins Consultants highlighted the many good reasons for continuing to pursue economic development at a region-wide level. The review also stated that a refresh of the Strategy was needed because of significant changes in the economic environment and because there were too many activities and initiatives.

The WRS Office has continued to make excellent progress with the good regional form projects of the Strategy. These projects have now been largely incorporated into councils' activities and, in the coming year, the Office will look to target resources on the new focus areas of building world-class infrastructure and business friendly councils.

Another important role of the WRS Office will be to monitor the region's economy and review and evaluate the results over time.

It was pleasing to note that the Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (GPI) won two major national awards. The GPI is a pioneering, innovative and original approach to measuring well-being.

Grow Wellington has also had a transitional year with staff, Board and operational changes. Amongst all the changes some good results were also achieved. Following the Strategy refresh process, Grow Wellington is refocusing its activities to align with the new Strategy.

The Committee would like to thank all those involved with the Strategy, and in particular the WRS Office, Grow Wellington and the Board for their hard work over the past year and for continuing to make progress during a year of economic and political challenges.

**SIR JOHN ANDERSON**  
Chairman

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY



The last year was a transitional one for the WRS with the refresh of the Strategy. The refresh has been a significant area of work for the WRS Office, and the result is a more focused Strategy. The Strategy identifies strategic interventions and leadership, supported by operational initiatives and the involvement of particular parties.

*The aim of the WRS is to build a resilient, diverse economy - one that retains and creates jobs (especially high value jobs), supports the growth of high value companies and improves the region's position in relation to the national GDP and national employment.*  
(Wellington Regional Strategy, 2012)

The region has continued to recognise the importance of collaborative efforts while at the same time being able to promote their local activities in the context of the wider objective of regional prosperity.

Through the refresh process, all the councils in the region renewed their commitment to continue to work together on economic development for the region. Greater Wellington, on behalf of the region, continues to host the WRS Committee and its supporting functions. The WRS Committee continues to oversee decision-making and governance. However, there have been changes to the role of the Committee as it seeks more active involvement in direction setting and advocacy of the WRS. The structure of the WRS Committee has also changed to include representation from all three Wairarapa councils.

We are currently reviewing our role in on-going activities and projects set up under the WRS. This has resulted in the WRS Office ceasing leadership of a few of the good regional form projects. Projects such as Open Spaces and Urban Design are continuing under different leadership, and much of last year's work involved reviewing project action plans and setting up working groups to enable them to continue without the leadership of the WRS Office.

Some of the previous WRS projects, such as the Genuine Progress Index (GPI), continue to be major pieces of work for the WRS Office. The GPI is important as a method in which to monitor the progress of the region across the four well-beings. We have made improvements to data collection and analysis. We have also commissioned the preparation of a full cost account on physical inactivity.

*Our role in regional economic development fits within a wider sustainability framework. Our mandate under legislation (including the Local Government Act 2002) requires us to consider a broad range of interests, including environmental, social and cultural matters. This positions us so that we are well placed to ensure that support for the economy fits within the wider interests and outcomes of the regional community.*  
(Wellington Regional Strategy, 2012)

The broadband project continues to be supported and success can now be seen as ultra fast broadband is rolled out across the region.

Grow Wellington is the region's economic development agency. It has a separate Annual Report on its activities and financials.

*While we benefit from being the centre of government, we also need to ensure our economy performs in all parts of the region, is adaptable to changing circumstances, and is responsive to a variety of economic opportunities.*  
(Wellington Regional Strategy, 2012)

## 2. WELLINGTON REGIONAL STRATEGY REVIEW AND REFRESH



### BACKGROUND

An independent review of the WRS was commissioned in the 2010/11 year, as agreed during the establishment of the WRS. MartinJenkins and Associates (MartinJenkins) was appointed to undertake the review in 2010. MartinJenkins completed its review, and the findings of the review were presented to the Committee, all councillors in the region, and the Grow Wellington Board in June 2011.

Overall, the review recommended the continuation of a regional approach to supporting economic development, concluding that “there remain good reasons for continuing to pursue economic development (including good regional form) at a region-wide level, and to fund and deliver economic development activities on a region-wide basis.”

However, the review highlighted that to fully recognise the benefits of such a region-wide approach, it was important that the strategy itself be refreshed, and that changes are made to the governance and implementation arrangements. This included a more action focus, and improved monitoring and reporting processes.

### RECONFIRMATION OF THE WRS ACTIVITY

Following the recommendations by MartinJenkins, a process to restart the regional economic development activity was followed.

A Mayoral Forum workshop was held on 15 November 2011 to discuss the future focus of regional economic development activities, the range of governance options, and funding and resourcing options for the WRS Office and Grow Wellington.

The workshop confirmed that all the councils are committed to working together to advance the objectives of the WRS and to continue with the regional economic development activity. The workshop considered four main aspects of the WRS: the region's strengths and challenges; the areas the region needs to focus on in the short to medium term; the governance arrangements for the WRS; and the operation of the WRS Committee.

The WRS Committee then met and resolved to recommend to Greater Wellington that the function of regional economic development be continued. This recommendation was agreed in principle by Greater Wellington. A proposal was then drafted and agreed by the Committee for inclusion in Greater Wellington's Draft Long Term Plan 2012-2022 for consultation.

Input was sought from a wide range of stakeholders covering the business, government and community sectors.

The final recommendation to continue the activity was made following hearings on the WRS proposals on 17 May 2012.

Through the review process, changes were made to the membership of the Committee and the allocation of rates funding. The size of the WRS Committee increased, with all the Wairarapa councils now represented. The quantum of rates funding has remained at \$4.6 million, however the allocation of funding between Grow Wellington and the WRS Office has changed, with the WRS Office receiving additional resource to undertake research, monitoring and project functions.

### A REFRESHED STRATEGY

Subsequent to the review of the WRS, and through the refresh process, the WRS Committee has made some significant decisions over the past year. Work was undertaken to assess the priorities, aim and focus areas of the WRS, and ultimately to write a new strategy document.

The Mayoral Forum workshop held in November 2011 agreed that the economic strategy for the region needed fewer, clearer, high-level goals than the 2007 WRS. It also agreed the goals need to be realistic and any use of rates needs to have real, measurable benefits. Six focus areas were considered by the workshop which remained as the basis for the refreshed 2012 WRS.

The new Strategy focuses on economic development activities, with the good regional form projects having been removed from the Strategy.



Further to changes in the focus of the Strategy, a revitalised aim of the WRS was developed which centres around economic development activities:- “ to build a resilient, diverse economy - one that retains and creates jobs (especially high value jobs), supports the growth of high value companies and improves the region’s position in relation to the national GDP and national employment.” (WRS 2012)

To achieve this aim, six new focus areas were developed, which demonstrate the need for a clear link between every initiative and achieving the aims of the WRS. Combined, the focus areas set out what councils, Grow Wellington and other parties propose to do to support economic growth and to build a resilient and diverse economy in the Wellington region.

These focus areas are:

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#### **FOCUS AREA ONE: COMMERCIALISATION OF INNOVATION**

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With a focus on business-led innovation, this involves supporting successful businesses to innovate and champion a vibrant and supportive business environment.

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#### **FOCUS AREA TWO: INVESTMENT MECHANISMS FOR GROWTH**

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This is about attracting international investment, making more of existing investment networks (such as angel investment networks) and ensuring businesses are in a position to realise investment opportunities.

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#### **FOCUS AREA THREE: BUILDING WORLD-CLASS INFRA-STRUCTURE**

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Regional economic prosperity is heavily dependent on the region’s level of connectedness and resilience at local, national and international levels. This is in turn dependent on the quality of our foundation infrastructure and transport systems.

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#### **FOCUS AREA FOUR: ATTRACTING BUSINESS, INVESTMENT AND TALENT TO THE REGION**

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This focus area is about having a targeted approach to attracting businesses, potential investors, skilled migrants and students to the region.

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#### **FOCUS AREA FIVE: EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TO SERVICE REGIONAL ECONOMY NEEDS**

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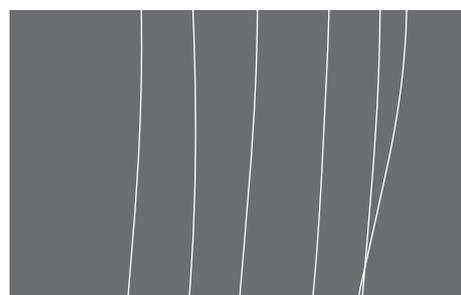
This focus area is about building on existing connections and initiatives to grow the region’s skills and education base, and ensure the region’s specific skills needs are met.

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#### **FOCUS AREA SIX: OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

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Being open for business is about councils delivering business services with a “can do” attitude and facilitating a business environment where smart, innovative firms can flourish.





For lead agencies and key areas of work under these focus areas please refer to the table on the following page.

#### NEXT STEPS:

An WRS Implementation Plan is now being developed. This will include the relevant activities of Grow Wellington, the WRS Office and constituent councils. For the WRS Office this means first undertaking an analysis of Infrastructure and Open for Business needs and determining what role the Office needs to play in achieving our goals.

Effective monitoring and clear evaluation processes will be critical to the successful implementation of the WRS. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed and implemented in a way that informs future interventions and demonstrates economic benefit to the region. An important aspect of this will be communicating results and successes both to stakeholders and the general public.

During the refresh of the WRS, the Committee expressed a desire to participate more fully in the on-going work of the WRS, and to play more of an advocacy role. The WRS Office will be supporting the Committee in this work.

*Successful regions of the world have proactive and innovative leadership. The WRS aims to facilitate the leadership and partnerships that will give life to the Strategy. This involves central and local government, and the business, education, research and voluntary sectors.*

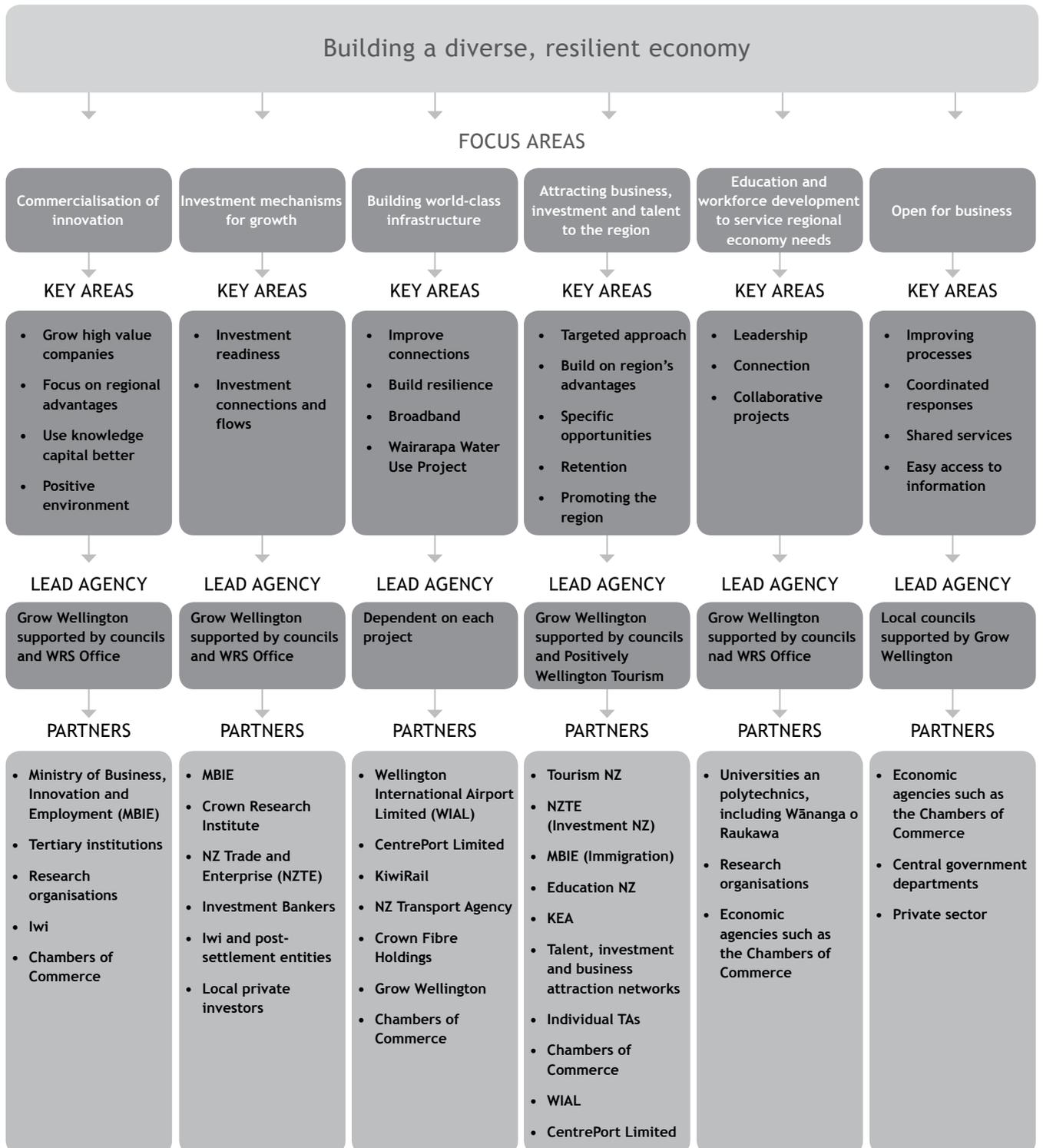
*(Wellington Regional Strategy, 2012)*



This diagram illustrates the new focus areas of the Strategy and the lead agencies and partners for implementing the Strategy.

## Implementation pathway

The WRS incorporates a diverse range of initiatives and partnerships. These are summarised in the diagram below.



## 3. PROJECTS



### 3.1 Broadband

#### PURPOSE

The WRS recognises ultra-fast broadband as a key enabler of economic growth, particularly in facilitating innovation and productivity benefits. High quality broadband infrastructure can also transform the delivery of education and health services, and facilitate new forms of community engagement and participation in public life. The use of high speed communications technologies is seen as necessary for the region to be a leader in the knowledge economy and to operate as a creative centre distant from many markets.

Under this project a series of workstreams aimed at reducing the cost and increasing the speed of in-ground fibre installation across the region have been developed and implemented

The main focus was to assist in the facilitation of the Ultra Fast Broadband and the Rural Broadband initiatives across the region. Another priority was assisting in the development of the draft standards for optical fibre deployment.

#### WHO'S INVOLVED

A Working Group called the Broadband Operational Group (BOG) was established with a cross section of representatives from each of the councils, Grow Wellington and New Zealand Transport Agency.

#### WHAT'S HAPPENED

The BOG held regular meetings with the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), Chorus and Crown Fibre Holdings over the last year. These meetings helped build a relationship between the organisations involved, and provided a forum for the exchange of information about respective work and projects, including discussions about what support could be offered through the BOG.

The Wellington launch of the Ultra Fast Broadband Initiative took place in Kelson in August. The then Minister of Telecommunications Steven Joyce, attended the launch with Greater Wellington Regional Council Chair Fran Wilde, Hutt City Mayor Ray Wallace and Wellington City Councillor Jo Coughlan. The first suburbs to be connected in Wellington following the launch were Kelson, Churton Park, Papakowhai, Aotea, Whitby, Mana, Cambourne and Plimmerton, with deployment now underway in Central Masterton.

The BOG organised a workshop for roading engineers on MED's

Optical Fibre Deployment in Road Corridors: Standards and Guidelines (the Standards). This workshop was designed to introduce the draft Standards, discuss the intent of the draft Standards and get feedback from the engineers so that their views could be incorporated in a submission.

The BOG, working with engineers from within the councils, provided on-going advice to MED on the drafting of the Optical Fibre Standards.

The region's chief executives sent a submission on the final draft of the Optical Fibre Deployment in Road Corridors: Standards and Guidelines to MED in November 2011.

The BOG also obtained legal advice on a draft standard for shallow trenching and the ability of corridor managers to control where shallow trenching might occur. This was a key step in determining the potential council liabilities relating to the standards. The final standard extended the warranty for shallow trenching work thus aiming to mitigate any liabilities for councils.

In September 2011, Chorus and Crown Fibre invited the Wellington region to work with them to determine the next areas for fibre rollout in the Wellington region from June 2012 - July 2013. The WRS Committee agreed on a list of areas it would like to see considered for the next stage of Chorus' fibre deployment in the region and this advice was discussed with Chorus.

Discussions on a proposal to develop a feasibility study on an internet-based broadband finder idea were held with Internet New Zealand. Broadband finder is a website concept that helps people to compare broadband deals and prices in your area. We provided Internet New Zealand with a draft feasibility study but this has since been superseded by initiatives underway between Consumer New Zealand and Internet New Zealand.

#### FORWARD WORK PLAN

Following the refresh of the Strategy, we are reviewing our future role in broadband, particularly as it relates to business uptake, applications and content.

In the meantime councils are liaising directly with Crown Fibre on setting priorities for rollouts in Years 2 and 3.

Councils are also working directly with Chorus on the management of rollout in their cities and updating councils and community boards.



## 3.2 Genuine Progress Index (GPI)

### PURPOSE

In the development of the WRS in 2007, it was considered important to measure overall well-being in the Wellington region. The WRS (2007) document set out the requirements for a Genuine Progress Index (GPI) to be developed for the Wellington region and outlined what is a GPI.

A GPI is a holistic measurement tool that governments and communities can use to measure whether a country or region's growth, increased production of goods and expanding services have actually resulted in an improvement or decline in well-being. For example, the GPI values the economic contributions of household and volunteer work, and of ecosystem life support services, but counts crime, pollution, sickness, and environmental degradation as costs, not gains to the economy.

It was considered important that the Wellington region GPI be able to assess progress towards the well-being goals of the WRS. These well-being goals are represented by the nine community outcomes identified for the Strategy. The main aim of the GPI is to measure the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the Wellington region.

### WHO'S INVOLVED?

The GPI Working Group, led by the WRS Office, is comprised of representatives from each of the region's councils, Grow Wellington, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington Employers Chamber of Commerce, and Capital and Coast District Health Board. A number of experts have been consulted to assist in the refinement of the GPI.

### WHAT'S HAPPENED?

Following the approval of the Wellington Region Genuine Progress Index (GPI): 2001-2010 by the WRS Committee in June 2011, the report was published and a website launched in August 2011, the website being the first of its kind in New Zealand, developed specifically for the GPI.

Feedback on the WR-GPI website has been positive and it has won two awards. In September 2011 the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) awarded the WR-GPI the 'Joined-Up Local Government' and the supreme SOLGM award. These awards supported the collaborative nature of the project, the pioneering, easy-to-use website, and the innovative and original approach to measuring well-being.

Further progress has been made on refining the indicators and gathering and analysing the data.

As part of the on-going development of the WR-GPI the GPI Working Group are now developing full cost accounts. Full cost accounts assign monetary values to areas of an economy that are not valued in traditional economic assessments (such as GDP). The GPI Working Group has been working with Waikato Regional Council and Auckland Council to develop full cost accounting.

Together, the councils contracted consultants to develop a full cost accounting methodology in 2011. In early 2012, the three councils were provided with a range of possible topics for a full cost account. Physical inactivity was chosen because there was already a proven methodology for physical inactivity from Canada, health indicators for the Wellington region were poor, and there was agreement from the three councils which meant that costs could be divided. A second contract with consultants was established to calculate the full cost of physical inactivity to the three regions. A report on the full costs of physical inactivity in the Wellington, Auckland and Waikato regions is to be released in late 2012.

### FORWARD WORK PLAN

The GPI report will be updated and published every two years, with data on the website updated yearly.

The GPI Working Group is investigating future indicators that could be included in the on-going development of the GPI. The Working Group will continually look to improve and develop new methods of measurement and research the availability of improved data sources,

As part of the work on the full costs of physical inactivity, the Working Group will be working with Waikato Regional Council and Auckland Council on how we can use the full cost account approach to promote different funding models and policy settings for other activities.

The Working Group will also focus on investigating areas where future full cost accounts could be developed as part of the GPI.



## 3.3 Regional Open Spaces

### PURPOSE

The WRS (2007) recognised that quality open space is a fundamental requirement of 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 and ecological values.

### WHO'S INVOLVED?

The Open Spaces Working Group is comprised of members representing the region's councils, Department of Conservation, Queen Elizabeth II Trust and iwi. The Working Group was led by the WRS Office until early 2012 at which time Wellington City Council took over the leadership. Additional support was provided by NZ Recreation Association (NZRA) and Parks Forum.

### WHAT'S HAPPENED?

The Wellington Regional Open Space Strategy and Action Plan was developed by the key open space providers across the Wellington region and was approved by the WRS Committee in 2009. The Strategy and Action Plan includes a vision for open space to 2025 which will guide the future provision and management of open space in the region. A three year action plan (2009-2012) was developed to identify actions that open space providers in the Wellington region intended to take over this period to address the challenges and help guide collaborative planning for the public open space network in the Wellington region.

The revised WRS focuses on economic development only and good regional form is no longer included in the strategy as activities of the WRS Office. For this reason, over the past year the major focus for the Open Spaces Working Group has been on reviewing the action plan to identify a revised set of key objectives for the next year, and for leadership arrangements to be set in place for the continuation of the Open Spaces Working Group. Several workshops with open space managers from across the region were held to confirm the new priority workstreams for the next year. The action plan has been simplified and focuses resources on fewer projects. Partner organisations such as Parks Forum and New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) have been recruited to take the lead on particular workstreams.

The group recognised that collaboration across provider and partner organisations is needed so that resources and solutions are shared and exchanged, there is consistent spatial data collection and management across the region, and members of the public are well informed about the Wellington regional open space network.

The main objectives of the revised Wellington Region Open Space Action Plan (May 2012) are:

- > To develop a regional approach to sports field provision and management - working towards harmonising levels of service and fees and charges where practical.
- > Information sharing and networking:
  - Establish Lower North Island managers Forums
  - Establish Regional Parks managers Forums
  - Continue existing Open Spaces Forums
  - Run master class training
- > Undertake a stocktake of existing Key Performance Indicators to enable comparisons on different approaches on different approaches to monitoring performance.
  - Consider opportunities to align Key Performance Indicators across the region as part of future council Annual or Long Term Plan planning processes
- > Sharing of information and alignment around asset management systems across the region
  - Look at other systems that are common to our business to enable more effective and efficient customer and business management
- > Coordinate marketing and events promotion
- > Maintain up to date GIS layers as part of regional portal.



The Open Spaces Working Group has made a commitment to work together on these initiatives. Lead agencies and key people have been identified and timeframes have been set. Resources and methods of delivery have also been identified. Wellington City Council is taking the lead, and other stakeholders such as Parks Forum and New Zealand Recreation Association have also offered to assist with the implementation of the Action Plan.

In the meantime, work has continued on other open space projects:

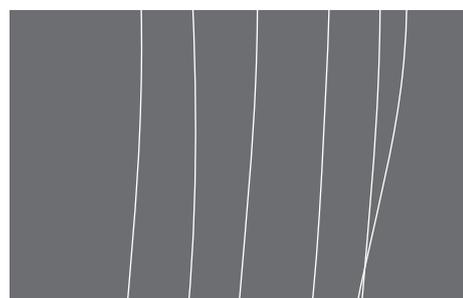
- > Maps were updated in late 2011 to show all scales of open space across the region. The open space areas have been categorised according to primary and secondary functions (environment/heritage, organised sports/activities and informal recreation/leisure). These maps allow people to plan for the future of open spaces across the region.
- > The open spaces information hub on the WRS website has continued to be updated to provide information about and links to events and conferences, other websites and documents which provide additional information and resources on open space issues and parks management.
- > The final open spaces newsletter was produced in November 2011. This highlighted key projects some of the councils were working on.
- > An email forum, which included around 60 practitioners from across the region, continued to operate until May 2012 when the revised open spaces action plan took effect.
- > Regular forums continued to be held, with the last forum taking place in October 2011. These forums discuss the planning, development, maintenance and marketing of various

open space initiatives across the region. The main aim of the open spaces forums are to share resources and best practices across the region. These events bring together open space practitioners, managers, consultants, and park rangers from across the region who work in this area. A further forum is being organised by NZRA and will be held later in 2012.

- > Development of a Biodiversity Portal, entitled “Where the Wild Things Are”. Having a widely recognised “one-stop shop” for information on the region’s top biodiversity sites is a key action of the Strategy. The top 50 biodiversity sites in the region were identified, those with high biodiversity values and good accessibility, and a regional portal established. This is near completion.
- > Sports fields: Work has continued on the development of a regional sportsfield strategy. The strategy will make an assessment of future needs and demand for the next 20 years i.e. an analysis of the gap between current and future sportsfield needs and demand. Grant funding has been provided from Sport New Zealand to enable consultants to be hired to assist with this work. The regional sportsfield strategy is due for completion in March 2013.

#### FORWARD WORK PLAN

The Wellington Regional Open Spaces Strategy and Action Plan (2012) will continue to be implemented.





## 3.4 Regional Urban Design

### PURPOSE

Quality urban design is about cities and towns that look good, feel safe and are easy to get around. In its broadest context it is significant to the entire region in achieving the quality 'good regional form' outcomes we seek.

### WHO'S INVOLVED?

The Urban Design Working Group is made up of representatives from all of the region's councils, Ministry for the Environment, Victoria University, New Zealand Transport Agency and Property Council of New Zealand. Members of this group have a particular interest in urban design within their own organisations.

### WHAT'S HAPPENED?

A Wellington Regional Urban Design Action Plan and Stocktake was signed off by the WRS Committee in 2009. Over the last year the Urban Design Working Group has continued to implement the Action Plan. In particular, the Working Group has focussed their efforts on the following initiatives:

- > **Urban Design training:** An urban design training course was offered to all elected members and council staff across the region. This one-day course was held in late 2011. Forty people attended - this included chief executives, mayors, councillors and council staff. The training was provided by Kobus Mentz of UrbanismPlus Ltd. Lots of positive feedback was received about the course and it is hoped that we may be able to run it again.
- > **Training initiatives:** 'Walk and talk' sessions continued to be hosted by councils around the region. At these sessions council officers provide examples of best practice and discuss key urban design issues experienced. The sessions are open to practitioners, urban design champions and councillors from across the region.
- > **Information-sharing:** The urban design information hub on the WRS website continues to provide useful links to regional, national and international urban design-related websites, courses and documents.

Due to the change in focus of the refreshed WRS, over the last six months the Urban Design Working Group has been reviewing the Action Plan to identify a revised set of key objectives and future co-ordination. Wellington City Council has offered to take the lead on the project, with the assistance of other councils in the region. A series of workshops with urban design managers from across the region were held to confirm the new priority workstreams for the next year. It was decided to simplify the action plan and focus resources on fewer projects and initiatives.

A broad goal was set to encourage better urban design at a regional level - to engage and learn from each other. The Working Group set priorities for the 2012-13 year, these being:

- > Regular networking opportunities to create connections with wider key staff e.g., landscape architects, engineers, consent planners and other council officers
- > Urban Design Working Group to meet every 2 months for programme sharing and learning with invites to occasional guest speaker(s)
- > Co-ordinated training and development opportunities e.g., urban design training
- > Cross boundary programme awareness and co-ordinated programme development and delivery
- > 'Walk and talk' sessions that target chosen themes.

### FORWARD WORK PLAN

The Wellington Regional Urban Design Action Plan (2012) will continue to be implemented.

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## 4. WELLINGTON REGIONAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE

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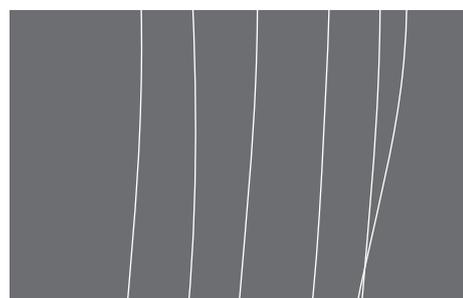
The governance of the strategy is the responsibility of the WRS Committee. Regional representation is provided by:

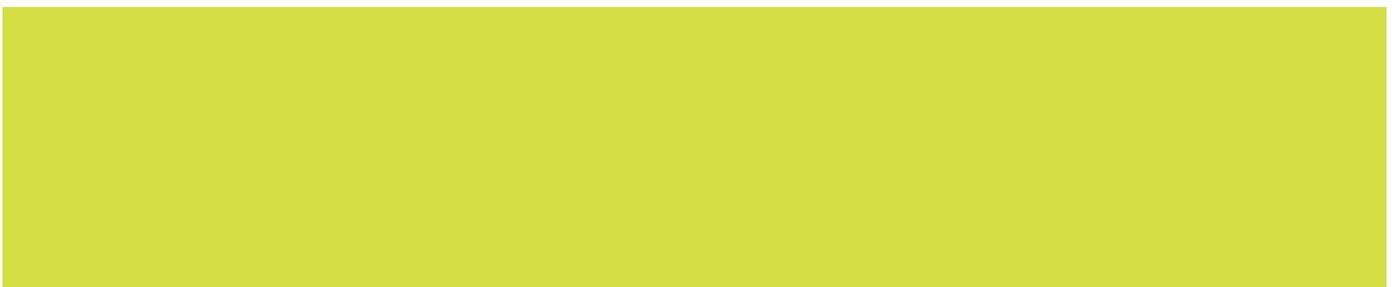
<b>Councillor Fran Wilde (Deputy Chair)</b>	Greater Wellington Regional Council
<b>Mayor Adrienne Staples</b>	South Wairarapa District Council
<b>Mayor Wayne Guppy</b>	Upper Hutt City Council
<b>Mayor Ray Wallace</b>	Hutt City Council
<b>Mayor Celia Wade-Brown</b>	Wellington City Council
<b>Mayor Nick Leggett</b>	Porirua City Council
<b>Mayor Jenny Rowan</b>	Kapiti Coast District Council

*There are also five independent appointees representing private sector and business interests:*

*During the 2011/12 year, the independents were:*

**Sir John Anderson (Chair)**  
**Professor Sir Ngatata Love**  
**Paora Ammunson**  
**Major General (Retired) Lou Gardiner**  
**Jackie Lloyd**







FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
WRS Office  
T 04 830 4300  
[wrsoffice@gw.govt.nz](mailto:wrsoffice@gw.govt.nz)  
[www.wrs.govt.nz](http://www.wrs.govt.nz)



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