ADDITION TO THE
1999-2004 WELLINGTON REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Western Corridor Implementation Plan

The Western Corridor runs from Otaki to the Ngauranga Merge. It generally follows the line of the current State Highway One and the North Island Main Trunk Railway from Otaki to Wellington. The 1999-2004 Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy includes the following project:

"Develop a Western Corridor Implementation Plan that includes both road and rail and identifies the optimum package for the corridor."

What follows is that plan. The technical support for the plan can be found in a companion report, "Western Corridor Implementation Plan Report of the Technical Group. 10 April 2000." The technical report is available from the Regional Council.

The Plan

Undertake the following roading and public transport projects in the corridor during the period 2000-2004 (note : projects not already included in the Regional Land Transport Strategy are marked accordingly and all $'s are set at 1998 values).

Roading

- Construct a new two lane bridge at Paremata ($4.3m) (new project)
- Complete the safety improvements on State Highway One north of Paremata ($8.7 m)
- Complete the safety improvements at McKays Crossing ($12.3 m)
- Implement the Active Traffic Management System at Ngauranga Gorge and three lanes in each direction south to the State Highway One and Two merge ($5 m)
- Construct the river crossing stage of the Kapiti Local Connecting Road ($37 m)
- Provide other safety and capacity improvements on State Highway One between Paremata and McKays Crossing appropriate to the timing of Transmission Gully (new project)
- Develop proposals for the future of the existing State Highway with appropriate agencies for once Transmission Gully is built (new project)
- Resolve funding, legislative and resource management issues relating to Transmission Gully, purchase required land and commence construction if possible (new project)

Public Transport

- Upgrade the Paraparaumu Railway Station building ($0.5 m)
- Build a new railway station at Raumati ($2 m)
- Extend the urban electric rail service to Waikanae ($5 m)
- Increase weekday urban rail frequency from the Kapiti Coast to Wellington to 15 minutes in peak period and 30 minutes in the of-peak (annual additional cost of $1.2 m)
- Provide additional commuter car and cycle parks at major railway stations
- Seal existing unsealed carparks at stations
- Increase rail feeder bus services to match the increase in urban rail frequency

Projects Outside the Corridor

- Construct the Ngauranga-Aotea tidal flow system ($16 m)
- Construct the bus/rail interchange and associated pedestrian connections at Wellington station ($8 m)

Projects Beyond 2004

Roading

- Construct Transmission Gully as a toll road as soon as possible ($233 m) (new project)
- Construct the remainder of the Kapiti Local Connecting Road ($24 m)
- Construct the Hutt Valley – Porirua Road Link ($62 m)

Public Transport

- Provide new stations at Lindale, Aotea Lagoon and Glenside as population growth creates sufficient demand ($4 m)
- Upgrade remaining railway stations on the corridor
- Provide light rail services or alternatives from Plimmerton and Porirua East to Wellington (enhanced bus and rail services being provided until demand warrants light rail) ($15 m)
- Provide additional rail services to Otaki and beyond.

Building Transmission Gully Early as a Toll Road will Require:

(a) Some funding from local sources depending on the level of funding support provided by Transfund New Zealand; and

(b) Legislation to allow the road to be tolled

Explanatory Background to Western Corridor Implementation Plan

1. What is Being Proposed and Why?

1.1 Current and projected traffic volumes and trip patterns along the existing SH1 Western Corridor (from Tawa to McKays Crossing) lead to congestion, disruption, bottleneck, severance and safety problems significant enough to warrant priority action.

1.2 Given the predictability of severe problems related to commuting trips, public transport (especially rail) improvement is a necessary early component of the action required; but given that the problems are also related to recreational and freight trips such action is not sufficient by itself to address the corridor's problems adequately;

Note: Increasing patronage on the Western Line will require downline improvements, especially at Wellington Railway Station and Bus Interchange. Though not part of this plan, these and other public transport improvements are proposed elsewhere in the Regional Land transport Strategy.

Public transport improvement is an effective measure against congestion but it is not so effective against the other issues in this corridor. In particular it will not relieve bottlenecks, and is less effective against weekend and holiday congestion.

1.3 While improvements to the existing alignment will be helpful in the short run, the "improve the existing alignment" strategy is limited in the long run because of its total cost and because of its significant adverse effects on the coastal environment and on communities;

1.4 Environmental and strategic reasons argue that the better long-term roading strategy involves construction of a new SH1 corridor along Transmission Gully; this option should be pursued sooner rather than later;

Note: There are also adverse environmental effects associated with the construction of Transmission Gully. In general these are lesser in nature than the adverse environmental effects associated with "do nothing" or "build coastal highway" options, and can be mitigated by appropriate effects-based conditions, eg, on siltation.

1.5 There is a 'funding gap' in constructing Transmission Gully, the difference between its total costs and the justified amount contributed from national dollars for national objectives and policies; but there is additional regional economic benefit in building Transmission Gully sooner, seen particularly in relief of congestion costs. It is appropriate that the 'funding gap' be made up from the direct beneficiaries in the region (ie, users, through tolls) if there is a willingness to pay.

Note: The Wellington Regional Council has signalled that it does not regard regional rates as an appropriate mechanism for roading revenue.

1.6 Scientific willingness-to-pay surveys have demonstrated strong support for a regional willingness to make up the 'funding gap' at toll-levels sufficient to do so;

Note: Randomly-sampled respondents in May 1999 indicated 67% support for building Transmission Gully sooner, and 62% support for themselves paying extra to achieve this. Support was tested at a toll-level of $4 peak and $2 off-peak. A "funding scenario" under which tolls would contribute the servicing costs of a $80 million loan would see toll-levels set at $2 at peak and $1 off-peak.

1.7 A tolled Transmission Gully will require enabling legislation; an Implementation Plan needs to take account of the time taken to achieve such legislation (and to meet any conditions it may impose); and needs to indicate the likely course of action if legislation is not achieved.

Note: The Indicative Timetable (below) provides the best-available assessment of the time taken to achieve such legislation. In the event that such legislation is not achieved then the normal course of events would see capacity improvements along the existing alignment and any adjoining roads and construction of Transmission Gully some distance (at least 15 years) in the future.

1.8 If Transmission Gully is to be built as early as possible then the level of income from tolls and national funding sources may not be enough and a further local contribution may be required. Legislation will be necessary to enable the region to raise a local contribution.

Note: A local contribution may come from a regional fuel tax.

1.9 Even assuming Transmission Gully is built sooner (by 2006), there will still be congestion, disruption, severance and safety problems along the existing road alignment at a level sufficient to warrant ameliorative action, and these should be undertaken to the appropriate level, a level that does not compromise the Transmission Gully strategy;

Note: proposed actions on the residual problems are:

Replace Paremata Bridge – an early priority;

Address Mana Esplanade – the original proposal of clearways would not be appropriate (it would compromise Transmission Gully). The bypass option is not appropriate. The modelling in the Technical Report shows some interim (reversible) increase in capacity that takes account of local access needs is warranted. Precise plans and alignments are subject to consent procedures.

Address safety issues on the rural section between Plimmerton and Pukerua Bay. Funding and consent processes are completed and construction is underway.

A bypass of Pukerua Bay is not warranted, but safety and severance issues at Pukerua Bay warrant mitigating action.

Some passing lanes to relieve build-ups along the coastal section from Pukerua Bay to Paekakariki are possible, but would require consents.

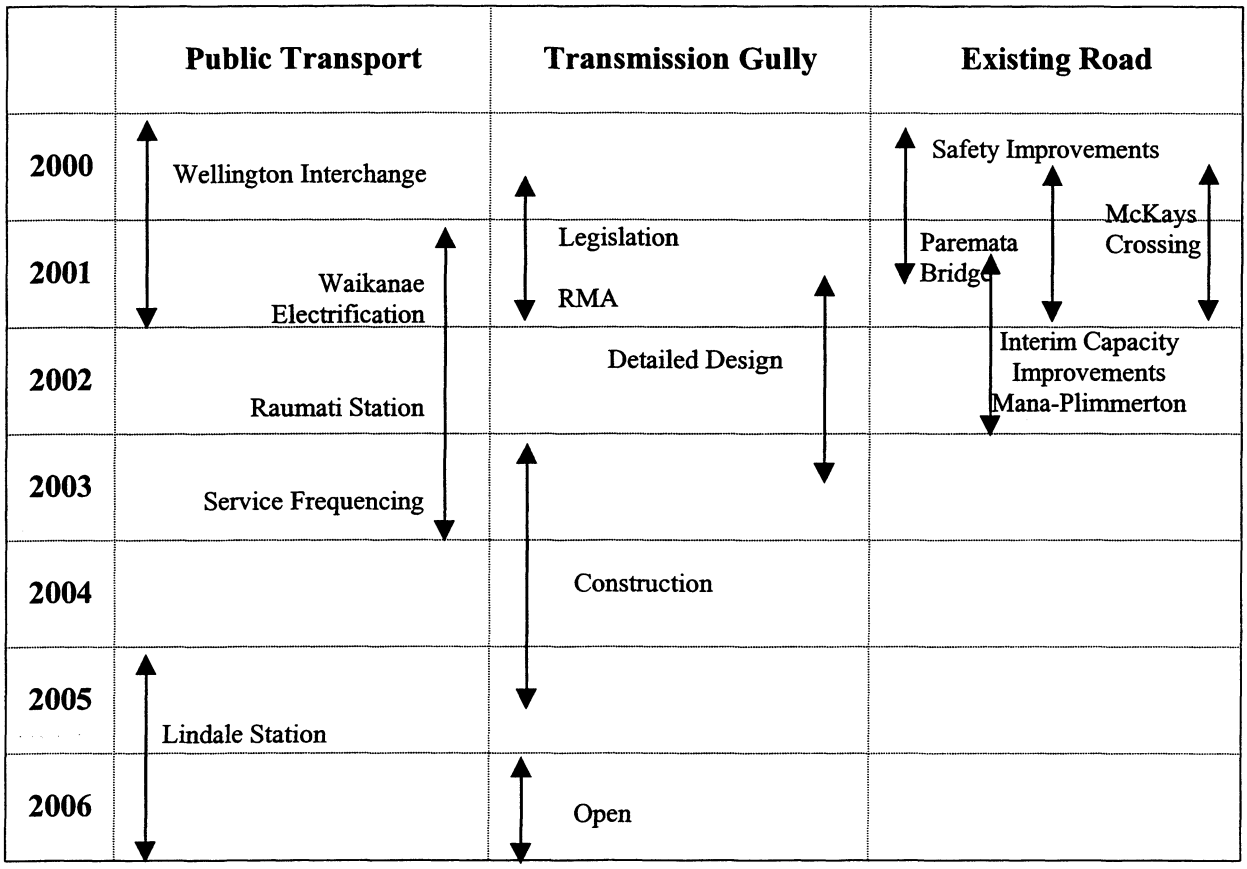
Action at McKays Crossing is funded, subject to resource consents.

1.10 The future management (beyond 2006) of the existing road alignment will need to take account of the existence of Transmission Gully as SH1;

Note: There are options here, best addressed at the time by the appropriate authorities. The existing road alignment will in any case continue to have a major arterial function as it is the main route for a significant local community already resident between Paekakariki and Tawa.

1.11 The downstream consequences of this strategy need to be addressed by the appropriate authorities – KCDC to the north; PCC to the west; HCC to the east; WCC to the south; and Transit NZ and WRC throughout.

2. When Might We See What?



*"Indicative" is to inform of the planned and likely sequence; it cannot be prescriptive, as achievement of it depends on the actions of outside parties, e.g. Parliament.

3. What Does It Cost and Who Pays?

See section 1 and the Technical Working Group report.

4. How Many Trips? What Is the Traffic Volume on the Existing Road After Transmission Gully is Built?

These and similar questions are answered in the Technical Working Group report. Note that the figures given there come from the regional transport model. They represent "best available estimates" given what we know of population and trip trends, employment and investment patterns, responses to new roads and services.