

Report 08.263
Date 17 April 2008
File WRS/09/01/01

Committee Regional Sustainability Committee
Author Victoria McGregor

WRS Office Activities Update

1. Purpose

To provide an update on activities and current priorities of the WRS office, including an update on WRS council-led projects.

2. WRS Office update

2.1 Work Programme

Over the March quarter the WRS office has had its major focus on establishing the work programme for the council-led projects (regional form) of the WRS.

Two priority projects the WRS office has been tasked with progressing are the GPI (genuine progress indicator framework), and the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol.

New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (NZUDP)

One of the main WRS actions relating to the NZUDP is that each council in the Wellington region signs up to the protocol. Hutt City Council has just been acknowledged as the 150th signatory to the Protocol. Greater Wellington signed up in 2007.

The WRS office has met with officers from those councils who have yet to sign up to the protocol. Feedback obtained from these meetings indicated that information from the WRS Office would be helpful to assist understanding the implications of signing up to the protocol, and particularly the level of detail required for action plans. The WRS office has met with officials from Ministry of the Environment to obtain resourcing materials, and is currently working with these councils to achieve the WRS action by 30 June 2008.

Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI) Framework

The WRS office has been reviewing literature and methodologies associated with GPI as background to developing a GPI framework. The GPI will measure progress with the WRS across the economic, environmental, social and cultural sectors of the region.

We are very fortunate to have secured two workshops with Dr Ron Colman from Canada and Dr David Kettle on Thursday 22 April 2008 (one governance level session and one for officers / technical level). Members of the Sustainability Committee were invited to the workshop.

Ron Colman has spent the last 12 years working on the development of a GPI for Nova Scotia and was commissioned by the NZ Ministry of Social Development in 2004 to write a report "Insights for New Zealand." He is considered an international leader in the field of GPI.

Dr David Kettle has been undertaking indicator work with Beacon and Local Government NZ on LTCCP indicators. This work brings in major indicator work present in New Zealand and other exemplary work from overseas (Canada, Australia, UK, Japan, Nordic Countries).

The workshop explained:

- What is GPI
- Comparison of GPI to GDP
- Where and how GPI is being used internationally
- What value can GPI make in the Wellington region
- How existing data sets can be integrated into GPI
- How the GPI can be implemented
- How will GPI provide both a regional picture as well as local characteristics
- How can GPI be used to inform governance decisions in a Wellington context

While we recognise that there is other indicator work already taking place in New Zealand, it is important to integrate this data to provide a regional picture order to measure progress with the WRS. We hope to identify issues and opportunities associated with the development of a GPI in the Wellington region, and determine the steps needed to take to develop the framework.

Also of note is that as part of the Auckland region's endeavours around economic development and sustainability issues, work has been commissioned on investigating and developing a GPI framework for their circumstances. The WRS Office is exploring scope for collaboration.

2.2 Progress on WRS Council led projects (regional form actions)

The WRS sets out 68 action items, of which half fall to local government to take the lead (the balance are via the private sector, Grow Wellington (regional economic development agency), central government and others).

Each of the council projects are being led by a member of the Senior Officers Resource Team (SORT).

Integrated public open space management – led by Greater Wellington Regional Council

In the development of the WRS it was recognised that quality of life is an important factor which complements sustainable economic growth. The open space action within the WRS aims to identify gaps and opportunities to improve regional integration of public open space, and working towards an agreed regional action plan for public open space management.

Greater Wellington Regional Council officers have agreed to steer this work with the assistance of a working group made up of representatives from district and city councils, Department of Conservation, and QE11 Trust. Recently, open space managers across the region were invited to a meeting to discuss how each authority is managing its public open space, the levels and types of protection, plans and future management approaches, and to confirm what is included as “public open space”.

There was a general consensus at the meeting that integrated management of open space will help with consistent planning approaches across all dimensions of open space management, a better understanding of recreation asset and opportunities for future planning, and a better understanding of the implications of planning on neighbouring authorities. The opportunity to share resources was also considered to be useful in terms of efficiency and shared knowledge.

The next step is to develop a task plan to progress the work.

Other Projects

Other council-led regional form projects currently being progressed within the WRS include:

- **Centre Plans and Big Box Retail - led by Wellington City Council**
 - Developing regionally consistent principles for managing big box retail depots and understanding and aligning the visions of individual centres

- **Industrial Land - led by Hutt City Council**
 - Undertaking a regional stocktake of supply and demand of industrial land using a common methodology and further investigating factors that affect supply and demand
- **Intensification / Infill Development - led by Wellington City Council**
 - Undertaking a regional stocktake of housing supply, intensification and infill overlays for each of the districts/cities
- **Rural/Residential - led by Kapiti Coast District Council**
 - Developing regional principles to guide the development and release of sustainable residential development opportunities, and development of regional tools to facilitate and guide rural residential developments
- **Affordable Housing - led by Wellington City Council**
 - Undertaking a regional analysis of housing affordability and housing needs
- **Quality Subdivision Design - led by Kapiti Coast District Council**
 - Developing a template of best practice principles to guide rural residential developments

3. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Victoria McGregor
Policy Advisor,
Wellington Regional Strategy

Jane Davis
Divisional Manager
Wellington Regional Strategy