



Report 08.331
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Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee
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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. 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. WRS Office update

3.1 Work Programme

Over the June quarter the WRS office has had its major focus on:

- Updating the WRS website
- Preparing for the Ron Colman Genuine Progress Index (GPI) seminars in April
- Setting up the GPI working group to progress the development of a GPI framework for the region
- Working with councils in the Wairarapa to assist them understand the implications of signing up to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol
- Assisting with the coordination of the regional open space working group to progress the open space actions in the strategy.
- Early stages of preparing a communications plan for the WRS office

3.2 Genuine Progress Index (GPI)

The officer level and governance GPI workshops with Dr Ron Colman and Dr David Kettle held in late April were very successful.

A GPI working group has been set up to progress this work. Most working group members are leading LTCCP monitoring for their councils. The group is investigating developing a GPI framework which draws from a combination of different GPI models and the Statistics NZ framework being developed to monitor sustainable development. It considers that the combination of these models will allow for a more genuine look at our regional economy, giving a full picture of whether things are better or worse off over time.

The framework being developed will focus on economic and environmental sustainability, taking into account social issues, perceptions of quality of life and cultural factors. Its main purpose is to monitor the success or otherwise of the WRS and to evaluate a set of indicators that give information about more social and cultural factors that have often been excluded from more conventional forms of economic appraisal. This work will be complementary to existing indicators being utilised by councils throughout the region for their LTCCP monitoring work. The GPI is not aimed at eliminating the GDP. It will simply be an additional way of assessing economic development for the region.

Several other regions are working in this space including Nelson, Christchurch, Waikato and Auckland. Central government is also undertaking work in the GPI area. A forum is currently being organised by the WRS office to bring the regions and central government together to discuss the different GPI approaches being undertaken. The GPI Forum is to be held 19 June 9.30 - 4.30pm at the James Cook Hotel.

It is proposed to workshop the GPI framework with the WRS Committee in August 2008.

3.3 New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

The WRS office continues to work with the two remaining 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.

A working group has been established to review options for a regional urban design action plan. This includes investigating the feasibility of an urban design review panel. This work will be work-shopped with the Senior Officers Resource Team (SORT) team in July.

3.4 Progress on Regional Form Actions

- **Industrial Land**

Hutt City Council is leading the project on industrial-based employment locations. A separate update report on this project is provided to the Committee in a separate report.

- **Centre Plans and Big Box Retail**

Wellington City Council is taking the lead in the development of a regional approach and framework for centres and big-box retail. This work is being undertaken in liaison with all TA's, developers and investors, professional institutes, business groups, Grow Wellington, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and Ministry for the Environment. Wellington City is currently consulting on a draft Centres Policy for Wellington city – this is a non-statutory document. This process will help inform the wider regional project. The topic is to be work-shopped in June with the SORT to ensure a regional approach is adopted.

- **Affordable Housing**

Wellington City Council is leading this project in conjunction with the other TA's in the region, developers and investors, government departments including the Department of Building and Housing, Housing New Zealand, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Ministry for the Environment, Grow Wellington, Wellington Chamber of Commerce and the Wellington Branch of the NZ Property Council. The topic is to be work-shopped in September with the SORT.

Stage 1 of this work proposes to complete a regional analysis of affordable housing availability including integrating central government analysis of social housing needs.

Later work will investigate the possibility of developing an agreement between major private sector developers to explore innovative housing design/developments that increase the range of housing types in key parts of the region. In addition, the establishment of a regional investment mechanism with the purpose of assisting local communities to unlock development potential for affordable housing and clear principles and criteria for triggering such investment actions will also be investigated as part of this workstream.

- **Intensification / Infill**

Wellington City Council is leading this project in conjunction with all TA's across the region as well as Greater Wellington. It is proposed to map and describe existing approaches to intensification and infill housing and 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

- **Open Spaces**

Greater Wellington Regional Council is leading this project. A working group has been set up comprising representatives from the territorial authorities, Greater Wellington, Department of Conservation (DoC) and QEII Trust. The first meeting of the working group discussed the following:

- Defining current types of open space and ownership/management across the region
- Identifying current open space plans, strategies, recent, current and future work across councils, QEII and DoC in the region
- Identifying issues around open space management.

The WRS office has assisted with pulling together updated zoning maps of open spaces across the region, updating regional maps and helping to coordinate the working group meetings.

A second meeting is taking place on 9 June to finalise a task plan with the aim of working towards an agreed regional action plan for public open space in the Wellington region. This will complement the work currently underway within Greater Wellington to review the Council's regional parks.

- **Broadband**

Regional collaboration and an integrated approach have been identified as a priority in the WRS in the area of broadband.

A SORT workshop on Broadband was held on 20 May, led by Wellington City Council. This workshop helped to confirm the respective roles of councils and Grow Wellington in this space and discussed the issues of concern for councils in this area. It also looked at some of the supply side factors that individual councils are grappling with such as the rollout programme of the major telecommunication companies and the provision of wireless services for phone/broadband.

The Broadband project will be coordinated through a sub-group of the SORT team under the guidance of the Chief Executives Group and will focus on three main areas initially:

- Development of a regional broadband plan
- Investigation into a regional funding application
- Consistent approaches to policy across the region

A more detailed update report on this project is provided to the committee in a separate report.

4. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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