

Report 11.116
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Committee Regional Transport
Author Natasha Hayes Senior Transport Planner

Draft Hutt Corridor Plan for approval

1. Purpose

To seek the Committee's agreement to release the draft Hutt Corridor Plan, set out in **Attachment 1**, for consultation.

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

3.1 Introduction

The Hutt Corridor is defined as:

State Highway 2 and the Wairarapa railway line from Ngauranga in the south through to Te Marua, Upper Hutt in the north, as well as east – west connections between State Highway 2 and State Highway 1, including State Highway 58. It includes major arterial routes and key routes for public transport, walking and cycling connecting with this corridor.

The current Hutt Corridor Plan was adopted in December 2003. It was the first plan, alongside the Wairarapa Corridor Plan, to be adopted. It is now due to be reviewed to reflect changes that have occurred in the past 7 years.

The review of the existing Hutt Corridor Plan seeks to:

- Ensure alignment of the plan with the strategic direction provided by the Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010 – 2040.
- Update the plan to take account of new trends, information, transport studies and land use policies relevant to this corridor.

The review will also determine whether those projects identified as beyond ten years in the existing plan are still relevant, whether they should be brought

forward or deferred, and whether any other projects or initiatives are required to address emerging issues.

3.2 Review Process

Review of the Hutt Corridor Plan commenced in June 2010. The review has been led by Greater Wellington officers with assistance from a technical working group comprising officers from Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Wellington City Council, Porirua City Council and the NZ Transport Agency. Input was also provided by the Wellington Regional Strategy office and other “transport objective” representatives such as Regional Public Health.

The review process to date has involved a number of workshops and meetings with partners on the technical group. Key steps involved:

- Development of a comprehensive background paper to understand the strategic context for the plan. This included key statistics and information from a number of sources to provide a picture of the key pressures and issues for the corridor.
- Consideration of the conclusions from several relevant key studies, including the Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study which was undertaken to investigate issues and long terms solutions for the “triangle” between State Highway One (SH1) Tawa to Ngauranga Gorge, State Highway Two (SH2) Dowse to Ngauranga and a possible link from the SH1 corridor to the SH2 corridor. This study was a major input to the corridor plan review.
- Identification of a list of potential improvement projects that have been proposed through various studies to address issues in the corridor.
- Development of objectives specifically for this corridor and an assessment of the contribution of proposed projects to these objectives (see **Attachment 2** to this report).
- Development of a draft plan with indicative timing, responsibility, and cost, for consultation.

4. Policy framework for the Hutt Corridor Plan

Corridor plans are non-statutory documents used to identify and agree the needs and associated major projects or measures along the region’s four main transport corridors. Multi-modal action programmes within corridor plans set out short to medium, and longer term measures to be progressed.

The Hutt Corridor Plan sits alongside the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) and contributes to the direction and desired outcomes provided by the strategy.

The vision of the Wellington RLTS is for *an integrated land transport system that supports the region’s people and prosperity in a way that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.*

The RLTS key outcomes are:

- Increased peak period passenger transport mode share
- Increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced severe road congestion
- Improved regional road safety
- Improved land use and transport integration
- Improved regional freight efficiency.

Regional plans for travel demand management, walking, cycling, road safety, and freight sit alongside corridor plans and provide supplementary detail about the measures to be progressed region-wide in relation to these areas.

The draft plan is consistent with, and takes account of, the land use direction provided by the Proposed Regional Policy Statement (RPS), the relevant District Plans, and the economic growth considerations provided by the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS).

The draft Hutt Corridor Plan has also been developed in the context of the New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS) 2008, Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport Funding 2009, Safer Journeys 2020 and other relevant national level policy documents.

The timing of projects in this corridor plan have been significantly influenced by the current GPS with its emphasis on progressing the various RoNS projects along State Highway 1, and funding availability through the National Land Transport programme (NLTP) 2009 - 2012. As a result, advice from NZTA around the deferred timing of many projects in the Hutt Corridor is reflected in this plan.

5. What we plan to do

This plan defines a number of packages for improvements to the transport network within the Hutt Corridor to respond to the current context and key issues identified through the review process.

The plan identifies measures to be completed over the next ten years, as well as longer term measures beyond ten years that should be developed and implemented as conditions and funding allows.

Over the next ten years the measures in the plan are focused on:

- Improving the strategic walking and cycling network through the Hutt Valley, including completing missing strategic links and upgrading key off-road routes to provide a good quality, safe and attractive facility.
- Continuing improvements to the rail network and rail services through the corridor, including refurbishment of the existing Ganz Mavag units and ongoing station and 'park n ride' upgrades.
- A package of safety improvements on State Highway 2, State Highway 58, Grays Road and the adjacent local road network.

- Investigation and construction of a new Petone to Grenada link road and associated improvements including potential ramp metering on State Highway 2, and the ‘bush to beach’ pedestrian/cycling link.
- Grade separating the intersection of State Highways 2 and 58 to improve safety and capacity.
- Providing for improved freight access between the Seaview/Gracefield industrial area and State Highway 2 through investigating improvements to the Petone Esplanade, and advocating for the continued protection of the Seaview rail corridor.
- Continuing a programme of travel demand management and road safety measures relevant to this corridor.

The plan also identifies further investigations over the first ten years of the plan in relation to climate change impacts, high occupancy lanes between Petone and Ngauranga, interim improvements at SH2 Melling and Kennedy Good intersections, and the feasibility of possible longer term upgrades of Akatarawa Road and SH2 north of Moonshine Bridge.

A detailed table of the proposed measures is set out in the draft corridor plan (**Attachment 1**) with associated responsibility, timing and indicative cost.

5.1 Timing issues

In developing this draft corridor plan, we have included project timing which reflects the advice from the funding agency (NZ Transport Agency) about when key state highway projects are expected to happen. A number of projects in the plan including the State Highway 2/58 interchange, SH2 Melling interchange and SH58 Safety upgrades have been delayed due to the quantum and timing of higher priority projects in the national programme such as the RoNS projects on State Highway 1.

It was considered appropriate to reflect the realistic timings for these projects taking account of the funding constraints and advice of the funding authority, rather than to consult on timings that would essentially be a ‘wish list’ and raise public expectations about when projects may happen. This has meant changes to project timings from previous plans and programmes.

The upgrade of the Melling interchange and Melling Bridge was a project given a high priority rating under the current Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP) with the design stage to commence in 2011/12. However, the recent scoping investigations for this project have shown a low benefit/cost ratio for full grade separation options. This, together with funding availability issues, has resulted in the project being deferred to beyond ten years.

Another significant change to the corridor plan relates to the potential for a new road link between Petone and Gracefield (also known as the Cross Valley Link). Investigation of this project through the Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study found that it has a very low benefit/cost ratio under the NZTA evaluation. Through further investigations Hutt City Council officers were able to identify wider economic benefits, however they considered that these were extremely unlikely to be accepted by the NZTA for funding purposes. This

means that funding the project would need to come solely from local share. As a result Hutt City Council has decided not to pursue the new link any further.

However, efficient access between the Seaview/Gracefield industrial area and State Highway 2 is still recognised as crucial. Therefore, Hutt City Council has decided to investigate improvement works along the Petone Esplanade over the next ten years to maximise traffic efficiency of the route to minimise congestion and travel time variability as much as possible. This may include measures such as upgrading intersections, making some minor intersections left in/left out, and lane widening. Investigation of a dedicated walkway/cycleway along the Esplanade is also proposed.

6. Consultation Plan

6.1 Key consultation messages

The key consultation messages for the draft Hutt Corridor Plan are:

- This is a review of the current Hutt Corridor Plan adopted in 2003.
- The Plan is one of several multi-modal plans identifying a package of improvement projects to implement the Regional Land Transport Strategy.
- The Plan has been developed collaboratively by officers of Greater Wellington, NZTA, Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Porirua City Council and Wellington City Council.
- The Plan responds to and integrates with planned growth as set out and agreed through the Wellington Regional Strategy, the Regional Policy Statement and District Plans.
- The Plan includes measures to: address congestion hotspots, provide for freight and commuters movement, improve multi-modal accessibility and improve road safety.
- The Plan also seeks to enhance the resilience of the transport network by providing better travel choice, improving network connectivity, and investigating longer-term climate change impacts.
- Timing of projects in the plan is indicative only, based on current advice from the relevant authority or NZ Transport Agency. Projects will be put forward to the next Regional Land Transport Programme 2012 – 15 for prioritisation and funding consideration.
- This is a high level plan identifying issues and multi-modal improvement projects. More detailed studies and investigations will be carried out by the relevant lead agency to progress development of individual projects through the funding, design and construction stages.

6.2 Legislative requirements

The Committee is not required to follow the special consultative procedure under the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 in relation to any corridor plan review as they are not statutory documents required by any legislation.

The development of corridor plans must, however, follow the general principles of consultation set out in Section 82 of the LGA.

6.3 Scope and target audience

Region-wide communication of the corridor plan review is appropriate. However, the focus of the consultation will be with the Hutt Valley, Porirua City and Wellington City communities together with key agencies, businesses and organisations with an interest in the development of this particular transport corridor.

The assistance of the technical working group members will be sought to identify key interested parties to send consultation material to and to engage with through the consultation period. Lists of those groups and organisations consulted during development of the Ngauranga Triangle Study will be also be utilised for consultation purposes.

Upper Hutt, Hutt City, Wellington City and Porirua City councils, the NZTA, and Greater Wellington are key stakeholders as they are the agencies responsible for implementing the measures in the plan. Officers will offer to make presentations to Councils.

6.4 Consultation elements

It is proposed to communicate the draft plan to the target audience and the regional community, and invite feedback, in the following ways:

- Media coverage – this will include a media release, article in ‘Our region’, and potentially features in Hutt community newspapers and opinion pieces as deemed appropriate.
- Public notices - in regional (Dominion Post and Wairarapa Times Age) and some local community newspapers as appropriate.
- Greater Wellington website - dedicated web page including a copy of the draft plan and background papers, together with an online submission form. Links to this web page from other local council and NZTA websites.
- Mail out - to key stakeholders and interested groups/businesses. This will include a copy of the draft plan together with an invitation to provide feedback and details of how and by when to make a submission.
- Greater Wellington and NZTA officers will also make themselves available to talk with any interested parties or councils during the consultation period.

6.5 Public access to the consultation documents

The draft Hutt Corridor Plan will be available from:

- Greater Wellington’s website (including links from local council and NZTA websites)
- Greater Wellington offices in Wellington and Masterton
- Local council offices throughout the region
- Public libraries throughout the region

7. Timeframes

Steps	Timing
Draft plan to RTC for approval	March 2011
Consultation period	April//May 2011
Submissions analysis	June 2011
Hearings	June/July 2011
Final Corridor Plan adopted	27 September 2011

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report;***
2. ***Notes the content of the report;***
3. ***Agrees to release the Draft Hutt Corridor Plan, as set out in Attachment 1, for public consultation;***
4. ***Agrees to the consultation process for the Draft Hutt Corridor Plan, as set out in this report; and***
5. ***Delegates to the Chair of the Regional Transport Committee authority to approve any final amendments to the draft plan resulting from this Committee meeting.***

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Natasha Hayes
Senior Transport Planner

Luke Troy
Manager Corporate Planning

Jane Davis
General Manager, Strategy and
Community Engagement

Attachment 1: Draft Hutt Corridor Plan – March 2011

Attachment 2: Assessment of proposed projects against Hutt Corridor objectives