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Report to the Regional Land Transport Committee
From Tony Brennand, Manager, Transport Policy

Wairarapa Corridor Study – Consideration of Issues

1. Purpose

To advise the Committee of the key issues arising from the Corridor Study and to provide some preliminary options for resolving the transport options.

2. Background

The current Regional Land Transport Strategy identifies a number of needs and issues for the Wairarapa corridor. A copy of these needs and issues is provided below.

“Identified needs and issues

- Low or declining population growth in the Wairarapa
- Continuing regional employment in Wellington CBD
- Above average (for the region) growth in forestry
- Increase in freight traffic on arterial freight routes to the Port
- Growth of tourism in the region
- Increases in recreation and shopping journeys; and
- Poor passenger rail commuter frequency.”

The Wairarapa Corridor Study provides an opportunity to examine these and other emerging issues in greater detail.

3. Comment

3.1 Issues

At the Committee there will be a presentation from Clement Fisk of Opus International Consultants on his economic review of the Wairarapa and its implications from transport.

The Wairarapa is predominately a rural economy, heavily dependent on pastoral farming, horticulture, services to agriculture and tourism. Forestry and wood processing is growing in importance. There is some commercial fishing.

Based on this sectorial makeup it is clear that access for produce to the Port in Wellington is an important issue and will be a constraint on Wairarapa's economic potential. As a consequence access to the Port is likely to be negatively affecting the Port's performance and therefore the region as a whole with places such as Napier benefiting.

The following table shows the usually resident population from the Census. In essence the population of the Wairarapa has been static over the last ten years. However, it has fallen by five percent in South Wairarapa.

Territorial Authority	1991 Census	1996 Census	2001 Census	1996/1991 Change	2001/1991 Change
Masterton District	22,566	22,755	22,614	101%	100%
Carterton District	6,867	6,813	6,849	99%	100%
South Wairarapa District	9,156	8,937	8,742	98%	95%
Wairarapa	38,589	38,505	38,205	100%	99%

Source: Census 2001; Usually Resident Population Count

Behind these figures are two migrations. The first is the migration of young people to Wellington or to the northern cities. The second is the movement of older people to the Wairarapa for pre or actual retirement.

The general picture of the Wairarapa is an ageing population, average age is around 40 years, except for Maori where the average age is around 20 years. The population is less well off on average than New Zealand citizens as a whole.

Examination of journey to work data shows that the level of commuting from Wairarapa to Wellington and the Hutt Valley is very small. On Census day 2001 there was a total of 1047 people who travelled by road and public transport of which 450 used public transport. It is likely that this low level of commuting is a reflection of the problems encountered on SH2 south of SH58, at Kaitoke and the Rimutaka Hill and a reflection of the level of service provided by the rail connection. Access to and from Wellington is limiting the attractiveness of the Wairarapa as a place to live in and commute from. This is likely to be a factor in the static or declining and ageing population.

The likely economic development options for the Wairarapa include:

- Wairarapa irrigation: increased land productivity
- Tourism: domestic tourism and international wine trial based tourism
- Education: an expansion of the Masterton Polytechnic
- Forestry and timber processing: a few years into the future but would likely require a new timber processing mill

- Continuing decline in Wellington CBD (head office and finance functions): a decline in the Wellington CBD is likely to lead to a general region wide decline in population.

If the Wairarapa develops in these ways the likely transport constraints are as follows:

Scenario	Constraint
Irrigation	SH2 south of SH58, Rimutaka and Kaitoke Hills
Tourism	SH2 south of SH58, Rimutaka and Kaitoke Hills, and Wairarapa rail connection
Education	SH2 south of SH58, Rimutaka and Kaitoke Hills, Wairarapa rail connection
Forestry and timber processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of local roads to cope with volume and loads • SH2 bypasses needed around Wairarapa townships • Rail freight yards may need moving out of the townships • The Rimutaka and Kaitoke Hill roads will need addressing otherwise tourism and general business activity will suffer
Wellington CBD decline	This may not generate transport constraints other than the Rimutaka and Kaitoke Hill roads which is identified as a constraint now.

It is clear that continuation of rail, both freight and passenger, is important for the Wairarapa.

The key issues for the Wairarapa Corridor Study are:

- a) State Highway 2 south of SH58 which is being considered as part of the Hutt Corridor Study
- b) Rimutaka and Kaitoke Hill roads
- c) the Wairarapa rail link to the Hutt Valley and Wellington
- d) the impacts on local roads of forestry
- e) SH2 bypasses of Wairarapa townships
- f) the location of rail freight yards in Wairarapa townships
- g) the retention of rail freight and passenger services.

3.2 Process

The intention is for the Technical Group to consider and evaluate options and report back to the Committee in February 2002. This will lead to the development of material for consultation about March 2003 and the formal consultation phase should

take place over the April-May 2003 period. Hearing of submissions should take place in June 2003.

4. Communications

There are no relevant communication matters.

5. Recommendations

That this report be received for information.

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