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Committee Regional Land Transport
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Western Corridor Plan - Implementation

1. Background

- 1.1 Projects identified in the Western Corridor Plan (WCP) include Transmission Gully, associated connections to Porirua City, Kapiti's Western Link Road, state highway improvements north of Mackay's Crossing, and electrification of the rail line to Waikanae together with new stations and services. Several projects are stalled by factors beyond the agent's control, and implementation corresponding to timing proposed in the plan is unlikely. The WCP features the construction of Transmission Gully as a tolled/PPP construction project. While proposed legislation has recently appeared that might enable such procedures, their application to Transmission Gully is still moot.
- 1.2 The timing of construction of Transmission Gully is a significant factor in the overall RLTS: preference for earlier timing blocks other options, but the maintenance of earlier timing in the face of slow implementation contributes to uncertainty for an unknown but lengthy interim. This uncertainty transfers through the whole RLTS, affecting other corridors, and wider regional environmental, economic and social issues. A principal task of the subcommittee is to install greater certainty, so that the next RLTS review can address the consequences. Media and public interest is high.
- 1.3 A review of the RLTS is currently due but is being delayed to enable compliance with new legislation and completion of model updates. The next review of the RLTS will therefore be undertaken under new requirements, probably including regional prioritisation with a different time horizon and an affordability criterion. That review will necessarily incorporate a strategic review of the WCP as one input, as greater certainty on the medium-term direction of the WCP will be required to complete a complying RLTS.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 As floated at the December monitoring forum, it is proposed to establish a subcommittee of the relevant agents to review information on current implementation, and review and report on the practicality of the current WCP. This includes the timing of construction of Transmission Gully.

- 2.2 The subcommittee could also be an appropriate vehicle to monitor undertakings entered into between some of the same agents in the “Paremata Protocol” of 1999, which was an undertaking to liaise on the progress of Western Corridor matters including rail. Under current arrangements the several agents often do not know what each other is doing in respect of undertakings affecting each other. Since responsibilities rest with different agencies (notably Transit, Transfund and GWRC) there is no particular person or agency overseeing progress – or lack of. The need for liaison was foreseen at the conclusion of Paremata/Plimmerton hearings, and a protocol entered into. In practice that liaison has been partial and informal, expectations disappointed, and subsequent wrangling costly.
- 2.3 The question of tolling and possible PPPs is relevant to other corridors and central to current RLTS assumptions about affordability. Acknowledging the mechanism might apply is one thing: getting it to actually apply another. Currently there is no co-ordination but much interest around this, and a need for some able and accountable vehicle to assess it. The proposed subcommittee can function as the initial clearing-house of relevant information, particularly as it contains relevant agencies focussing on the practicality of a specific proposal.
- 2.4 The establishment of such a subcommittee now in respect of the Western Corridor signifies significance and urgency being attached to installing greater certainty into the WCP. It is intended to feed conclusions into the review of the RLTS. A subcommittee mechanism establishes known procedures, reporting lines, and notifications. It cannot incur costs itself nor apply unexpected costs to constituent agencies. The membership proposed includes all agencies that are directly affected. User and commercial groups should be consulted in the course of proceedings. The subcommittee is intended to expire upon completion of its tasks.
- 2.5 Options available to the Committee include laissez-faire (do nothing extra), adopting an alternative arrangement such as a smaller more targeted task force, or amending the course or composition of the subcommittee proposed. The issue is seen as sufficiently significant to justify action, and sufficiently complex to justify the course proposed.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receives this report and notes its contents.*
2. *Establishes a Western Corridor Plan Implementation Subcommittee to:*
 - (i) *review current implementation of the Western Corridor Plan*
 - (ii) *review and report on the practicality of the Western Corridor Plan*
 - (iii) *prepare reports on these subjects for each meeting of the RLTC.*

3. *Establish the membership of the Western Corridor Plan Implementation Subcommittee as the relevant RLTC members (and technical advisors) of:*
 - (i) *Transit*
 - (ii) *Transfund*
 - (iii) *Kapiti Coast District Council*
 - (iv) *Porirua City Council*
 - (v) *Wellington City Council*
 - (vi) *Hutt City Council*
 - (viii) *Upper Hutt City Council*
 - (ix) *Wellington Regional Council- public transport function.*
4. *Approve the appointment of the Regional Land Transport Committee Chair as chair of the Western Corridor Implementation Subcommittee.*
5. *Review the continuation of the Western Corridor Plan Implementation Subcommittee within the review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy.*

Report prepared by:

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