



**Report**                    **06.100**  
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**Committee**            **Regional Land Transport**  
**Author**                **Ian Buchanan Chairperson, Greater Wellington Regional Council**

## **Western Corridor Plan**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to consider the findings of the Western Corridor Hearings Subcommittee and recommend a new Western Corridor Plan to Greater Wellington Regional Council for inclusion in the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

### **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**

The Western Corridor Hearing Subcommittee released its findings on 8 March 2006. The Committee received a presentation from the Subcommittee on that day. On 13 March the Committee met and passed a number of resolutions in relation to this matter. These are shown in the minutes of that meeting, elsewhere in this order paper. The most significant decision of the Committee was to “*endorse in principle*” the findings of the Subcommittee.

### **4. Comment**

There are a number of significant matters that this Committee must consider before it can recommend adoption of a new corridor plan to the Council, they are:

- The content of the Hearing Subcommittee report
- The affordability of Transmission Gully Motorway
- The detail of the new Western Corridor Plan

These matters are addressed in turn in the following paragraphs.

## **4.1 Hearing Subcommittee report**

The Subcommittee has brought together all of the available information and views to produce a comprehensive analysis and set of findings. Their report to this Committee should now be seen as providing the definitive statement on the transport issues related to the Western Corridor and a direction for addressing these issues.

The Regional Land Transport Committee has endorsed the findings in principle. These are now translated in total as the recommended Western Corridor Plan (**attachment 2**) for inclusion in the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

The Subcommittee attempted to show how funding streams could be allocated to achieve the elements of the corridor plan. This was done without having a regional context to work from, or sufficiently accurate information on funding sources. This exercise by the Committee was not part of their central brief, but has produced a useful starting point from which to advance. The potential funding sources provided in the recommended corridor plan are consistent with a full regional approach to land transport funding as set out in report 06.101. They are not the same as those suggested by the Subcommittee.

The Hearing Subcommittee report addressed both content and process issues. This report picks up content matters. Process matters such as interpretations of the Land Transport Act 1998, modelling, Planning Balance Sheet construction and assessments, reliability data, and various inclusions/exclusions in consultation will be addressed as appropriate in the development process of the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

## **4.2 Affordability of Transmission Gully Motorway**

Affordability is one of many matters that we must take into account before recommending the adoption of the new Western Corridor Plan to Council. I am satisfied that the Subcommittee's report appropriately takes account of all considerations required of us under s175(2) of the Land Transport Act 1998 and suggests an appropriately balanced solution. The proposed Regional Transport Programme (report 06.101) clearly shows that if Transmission Gully is to be constructed by 2016 the funding shortfall is \$543m (\$428m Crown loan, \$115m toll funded loan). Funding for the repayment of these loans is shown against income streams from both tolls and Land Transport NZ revenue over 35 years.

The decision whether or not to fund the construction of Transmission Gully Motorway is ultimately taken by Land Transport New Zealand after it has received a funding application from Transit. Transit must take into account a number of matters including any relevant regional land transport strategy as it decides whether to construct Transmission Gully Motorway. The new corridor plan will clearly define the region's expectations. Ultimately decisions about the amount of funding available in the National Land Transport Programme are made by the Government of the day.

### 4.3 New Western Corridor Plan

The function and framework of the corridor plans is set out in **attachment 1** of this report. Corridor plans translate the vision, objectives and policies of the Regional Land Transport Strategy into specific action packages for the region's five major transport corridors. The Western Corridor is one of these.

The new Western Corridor Plan is shown in **attachment 2**. It is based on the Proposed Western Corridor Plan (1 October 2005) and the findings of the Hearing subcommittee (8 March 2006).

## 5. Next steps

The most important step available to progress the proposed Western Corridor Plan immediately is to undertake the geotechnical investigations of the Transmission Gully route to clarify uncertain elements of design and costing. This step can be undertaken this coming year out of the allocated C3 funding on the understanding that it is necessary investigation, not in itself a commitment to construct. Greater Wellington has already submitted on this to Transit's draft State Highway Forecast consultation.

There are a number of issues around proposed funding mechanisms that should also be addressed in parallel. They include securing Government commitment to a Crown loan mechanism, discussion of options for debt servicing, the inclusion of tolling and the appropriate technology for tolling. These issues should be addressed at political level as they will require discussions with Government Ministers.

## 6. Communication

The Western Corridor debate has a very high public profile, and is extensively covered in the news media. Officers will ensure that the news media is advised of the meeting, receives copies of the agenda, and that decisions are communicated via media release and public and council websites.

## 7. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. **Adopts** the Western Corridor Plan (April 2006) as set out in Attachment 2 of this report;
2. **Recommends** that Greater Wellington Regional Council amends the Regional Land Transport Strategy by replacing the Western Corridor Plan Implementation Plan (1999) with the Western Corridor Plan (April 2006); and
3. **Establish** a deputation, led by the Chair of Regional Council, comprising of the chair of the Regional Land Transport Committee and the region's mayors, to undertake discussions with appropriate Government Ministers

*to resolve uncertainties in funding the Western Corridor Plan, and to report back to the Committee.*

Report prepared and approved by:

**Ian Buchanan**

Chairperson, Greater Wellington Regional Council

**Attachment 1: Corridor Plan Overview**

**Attachment 2: Western Corridor Plan (April 2006)**