

Western Corridor transportation **study**

Preliminary discussion document



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Contract 3064

Prepared for
Greater Wellington Regional Council / Transit New Zealand

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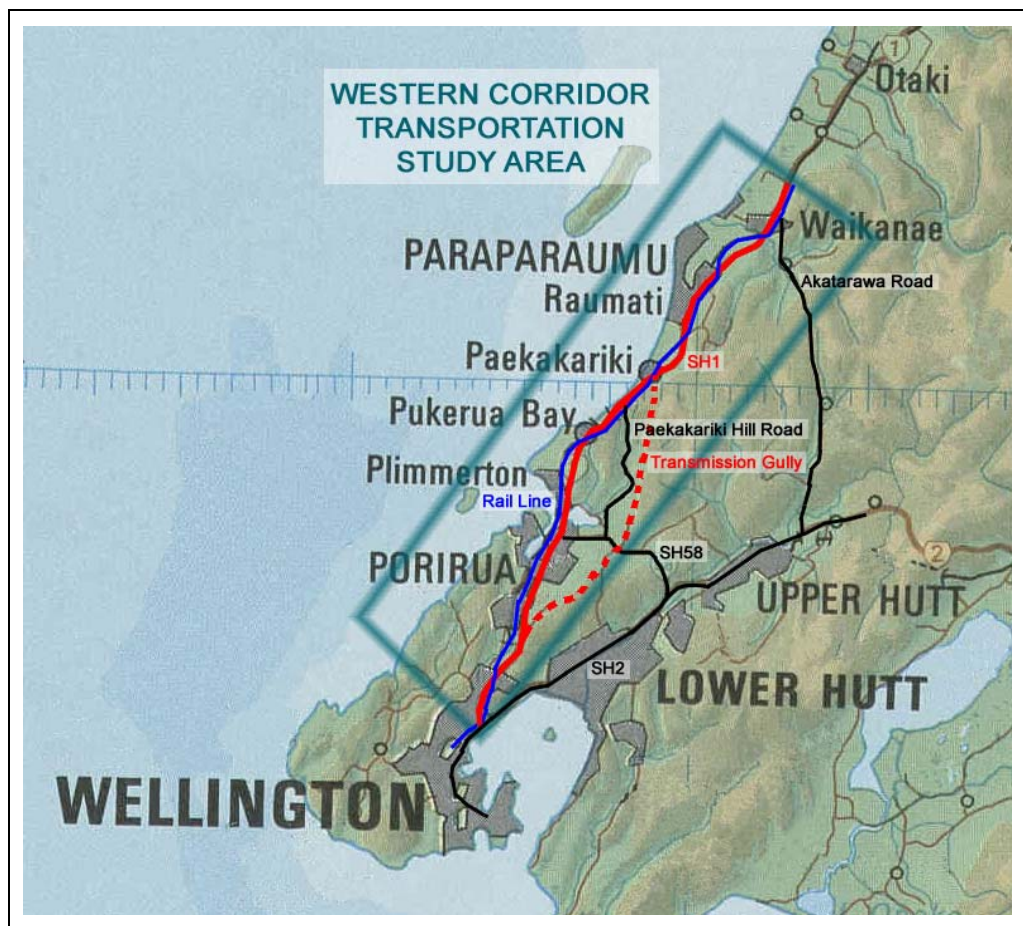
Review of transport strategy for Western Corridor

1. Introduction

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and Transit New Zealand have started a review of the transport strategy for the western corridor. The western corridor is principally the major north-south transport routes, including road and rail, from north of Waikanae to Ngauranga. The review will also take account of the associated east west routes linking to the Hutt Corridor up through the Hutt Valley.

As a first step we are asking you, the community, to tell us your view of the issues and the potential options. We would also welcome comment on the objectives of the study.

The western corridor provides links of national importance to and through the region and is vital to its the economic welfare. While congestion and safety concerns have prompted a variety of proposals and studies in recent years, this review will look more comprehensively at the relationship between road and rail improvements, car, public transport and freight movements, travel demand management and road pricing. The aim is to determine a package of transport proposals that best meets the objectives for the corridor and the region. The package also needs to meet the wider objectives for the region while recognising national interests.



A project team, led by Maunsell Ltd and assisted by Environmental Management Services Ltd and Boffa Miskell Ltd, has been commissioned to work with GWRC and Transit on this review.

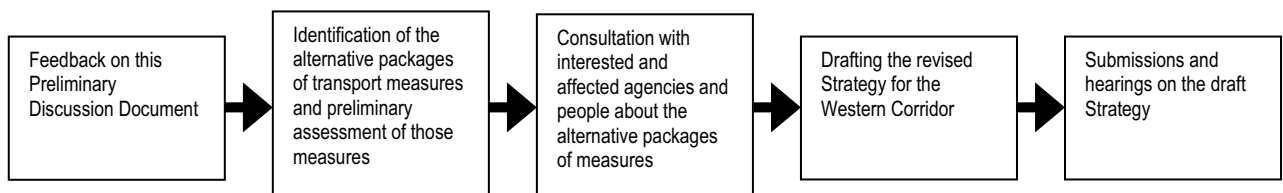
This review is timed to provide input to the next Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (WRLTS) which covers the period 2005-2015. The WRLTS sets out the objectives, policies and plans for land transport in the Wellington Region for the next 25 years. The work carried out to develop the Long Term Council Community Plan, and the outcomes that are important to the community which it includes will also be considered as part of this study.

2. Next steps

GWRC and Transit are talking to the community as we review the strategy for the corridor. This discussion document begins that process by:

- summarising the issues and options identified in earlier work
- asking for comment about the issues facing the corridor
- asking for comment on possible options and how they should be evaluated
- inviting people to register their interest in this review.

The next steps in developing the strategy are shown below.



Comments and ideas received in response to this Discussion Document will be used in the studies that follow to develop packages of alternative measures. Further consultation is planned to help refine transport proposals and identify a preferred package of measures. The preferred package of measures will form the basis of a draft western corridor strategy which will be made available for public submissions. Hearings of submissions are likely to be held in the third quarter of 2005. The overall study process will involve the development and evaluation of transport proposals including roading, public transport improvements and the management of travel demand. Parking and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will also be considered.

3. Other related work - Wellington Regional Strategy

Alongside this review, the region's local authorities are collaboratively developing a regional growth framework, called the Wellington Regional Strategy, which will outline the direction and needs of regional development over the next 20 years and beyond. Close liaison is being maintained between the two studies to ensure that an integrated transport and land use strategy is achieved for the western corridor. As work develops, the Regional Strategy will influence the development of ideas and options for the Western Corridor. Similarly, ideas that you may have about the Western Corridor will be passed to the Regional Strategy team for them to consider.

4. Issues

We all have a view on the various issues for the corridor, often reflecting our perspectives as residents, car commuters, public transport users, business owners, environmentalists or often, combinations of the above. We really want to hear what you think are the issues we should be thinking about. Some that have been raised before include:

4.1 Increasing congestion and trip time variability

Southbound traffic congestion occurs during the weekday morning peak at McKay's Crossing, at Plimmerton, south of Tawa and at Ngauranga Gorge. Northbound congestion occurs during the weekday evening peak at Mana and Pukerua Bay.

Weekend and holiday hold-ups occur northbound at the Paraparaumu lights and the Paremata roundabout and southbound south of Paraparaumu. Weekend and holiday congestion is expected to worsen; especially north of Pukerua Bay at current levels of growth in traffic volumes. Improvements at Paremata-Mana will give some relief in this locality for the short term.

Without changes, congestion is projected to increase significantly over the next decade with associated social, economic, environmental and personal costs.

Traffic volumes on the SH58 connection between SH1 and the Hutt Valley are increasing and there are significant roading constraints around the Pauatahanui Inlet.

4.2 There are concerns that conditions in the corridor may affect development

The current and projected corridor conditions could act as a brake on regional economic development and worsen community severance. There is evidence of freight transport companies preferring to bypass Wellington because of congestion and trip time variability in the western corridor. Ferry operators report ferry-bound freight is increasingly late, caught in traffic. Auckland-style traffic congestion issues are beginning to appear on this corridor and, without changes, will only increase.

4.3 Risk of Closure

Because of the steepness of the hillsides, there is a risk of prolonged road and rail closures due to storms, slips or other major events. Although prolonged closures are rare, the consequences are significant – affecting national as well as regional transport movements.

Other incidents such as crashes, spills, lane closures and bad weather occur more often causing lesser delays but, with increasing traffic and limited alternative routes, the occurrence and duration of such delays may increase.

Access to the region's main hospital, port, airport and largest commercial centre are all affected by these unpredictable closures and delays. Management of a civil defence emergency would be difficult if the corridor was closed.

The lower standard and limited capacity for east-west road connection affects community access and the economic link from the north to the Hutt Valley.

4.4 Increasing difficulty for local traffic

There are significant problems for local access where major transportation infrastructure passes through existing communities eg in Kapiti Coast District where SH1 is currently the only major north-south road servicing the area.

A related issue is ‘rat-running’ – the practice of using unsuitable local roads as short cuts to bypass sections of SH1 eg Airlie Road and Paekakariki Hill Road which are not suitable for long vehicles or heavy traffic volumes.

4.5 Public transport alternatives

While peak-hour journey time is similar to travel by private car, the frequency of services is not as good as it could be. At peak times there is a lack of seating and the station carparks are often full.

4.6 Increasing freight movement

Freight travel is growing in the corridor, on both road and rail. Freight movement is closely linked to economic growth which is important to the region. Demand for log transport is expected to grow.

Opportunities to divert road freight to rail are constrained by the single track and the speed-restricted Pukerua escarpment section and tunnels in this section that are too small to accommodate larger shipping containers.

4.7 Growth in other trip purposes

Significant growth in tourist and recreational travel on the corridor is expected to continue.

4.8 Environmental issues

Transport related runoff may be contributing to pollution of the Pauatahanui Inlet, which is a recognised national conservation area. From Pukerua Bay to Paekakariki the existing transport corridor squeezes along a narrow coastal terrace between seawalls and the steep escarpment. The coastal environment in this area is particularly sensitive to any transportation improvements

Disturbance from transport noise in built-up areas eg Camborne-Mana is increasing although noise mitigation is being installed here in conjunction with the current improvements. On a global scale a transportation strategy that actively encourages increased use of public transport makes a positive contribution to reducing transport emissions including CO₂ (Kyoto Protocol).

4.8 Social Issues

At a local level transportation strategies which reduce congestion reduce the level of air pollutants and particulate emissions which can have a localised adverse impact on the public health of adjacent communities. Traffic volumes and traffic speeds contribute significantly to the noise environment of adjacent land uses.

Balanced provision for different modes of transport can enhance mobility for the transport disadvantaged including children, low income, elderly, disabled.

The congested nature of SH1 makes travel difficult for communities along its length and creates social severance issues. The link from Mana to Porirua City Centre would ideally be separated from the longer distance traffic.

There is uncertainty for communities, whether residents, businesses, landowners and investor/developers, in not knowing the long-term transport structure

Road crashes and safety remain critical issues despite local improvements put in place by the road controlling authorities eg SH 1, Grays Road, Paekakariki Hill Road.

There are concerns that increasing road capacity may simply encourage more traffic.

Does the above summary accurately capture all relevant issues?

Are there other issues the review should consider?

Please provide your comments on the attached feedback form

5. Options

The range of options that will be investigated will be determined after this preliminary stage of consultation. However it will include consideration of at least the following:

- Public Transport:
- rail service frequency improvements and extensions to services
 - track speed improvements
 - park and ride improvements

- Roading:
- Transmission Gully
 - coastal route upgrades including Pukerua Bay Bypass
 - further upgrade Mana/Plimmerton
 - Western Link Road (Kapiti Coast district)

- Transport Pricing:
- tolls charged on new roads
 - public transport incentives eg cheaper peak-time fares

- Travel Demand Management:
(measures aimed at reducing or holding traffic growth as an alternative to building additional roads)
- encouraging greater use of public transport
 - car pooling
 - telecommuting
 - decentralised workplaces and/or higher density housing in major workplace locations (eg Wellington CBD)
 - parking supply and pricing
 - land-use planning measures eg through district plans

- Pedestrian and cycling facilities:
- Improved cycling routes, links and access to public transport

Possible future improvements will be compared with a ‘base case’ which will include the following committed improvements:

Inner City Bypass Stage 2:	About to commence construction.
Mana-Plimmerton Upgrade	Currently under construction.
MacKays Overbridge	About to commence construction

Are there other options that should also be considered?	<i>Please provide your comments on the attached feedback form</i>
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6. Objectives

The discussion above has outlined the scope of issues and options that will be considered in the review. However, before embarking on this path it is important to be clear about the outcomes that the region wishes to achieve. The Land Transport Management Act contains five objectives. The Regional Land Transport Committee has endorsed these five objectives with minor amendment and has added a sixth in response to the current legislative environment which addresses efficiency and affordability:

- assist economic and regional development
- assist safety and personal security
- improve access, mobility and network reliability
- protect and promote public health
- ensure environmental sustainability
- consider economic efficiency and affordability.

These objectives will be the basis for assessing the options considered in this review. It is intended that a set of performance indicators and targets will be developed for that assessment.

Are the above objectives reasonable?

*Please provide your
comments on the
attached feedback
form*

7. Your Response

We welcome your comments on the attached feedback form. Alternatively, at this stage you may just wish to register interest in the project which will ensure that you are included in future communication and consultation.

The closing date for responses to be received is Monday 1st November 2004.

Additional copies of this document and other detailed information about the review are available from the Greater Wellington Regional Council web site www.gw.govt.nz, Transit Wellington Regional Office website www.transit.govt.nz and directly from city and district council offices or the above organisations. All responses will be acknowledged, and a summary of comments received will be available from the web site.

Please send your response to: Or e-mail to wcts.feedback@maunsell.com

Western Corridor Transportation Study
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Wellington

Western Corridor transportation **study**

We welcome your comments. This comments form is provided for your convenience, but you are welcome to add more pages or compose your own response.

Does the summary of issues accurately capture all relevant issues? Are there other issues?

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Are there other transport alternatives and options that should also be considered?

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Do you have any comments on the aims and objectives?

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Do you have any other comments on the review?

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Please provide your details so that we can acknowledge receipt of your submission and contact you if we need to clarify any aspect of your comments with you.

Name
Address
Telephone
Email

Are you commenting as a representative of an organisation: YES NO

Name of your organisation:.....

Your position as representative of the organisation:.....

Do you wish to be included on our mailing list to receive further information as it becomes available?

YES NO

The closing date for responses to be sent is 1st November 2004.

Please forward your comments to:

Western Corridor Transportation Study
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PO Box 27277
Wellington

Or e mail to: wcts.feedback@maunsell.com

