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Dear Sir/Madam

Submission from Greater Wellington on the Draft Hutt Corridor Plan 2011

Introduction

The Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Regional Transport Committee on the Draft Hutt Corridor Plan 2011.

Corridor Objectives

The Council supports the objectives identified in the corridor plan which are consistent with the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy. In particular, we are pleased to note that improving access for all modes (and integration between modes), providing more efficient and reliable rail networks, and increasing trips made by public transport are included in the plans objectives.

Transport Pressures and Issues

The Council supports the need to connect key population areas, employment and industrial centres, and other key destinations within the Hutt Valley and with the wider region. We recognise the need to improve east-west links between SH2 and SH1 for people and freight. Also, the importance of improved access between key industrial areas in Hutt Valley such as Seaview/Gracefield with the Wellington Port, Wellington City CBD and Wellington International Airport.

In addition, Wellington City, an existing dominant population and employment centre with likely continued high growth, is likely to drive a large proportion of commuter trips and freight movements in the future. Providing for these trips is rightly an important aspect of this corridor plan, not withstanding the need to provide access that will strengthen sub-regional centres and the need to provide more opportunities for local employment.

Network Resilience

Improving the resilience of our transport network is seen as a critical issue for the region, and is a very relevant issue for the Hutt corridor which is particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards as set out below:

- SH2 and the railway line between Petone and Ngauranga and the Petone Esplanade are particularly at risk from future sea level rise, slips and storm surges as a result of climate change.
- There are also significant flood management issues and risks associated with the strategic transport network through the Hutt Valley in relation to both the Hutt River and Waiwhetu Stream. (We note that the Waiwhetu Stream bridge crossing is currently the lowest of all bridges over the Waiwhetu Stream and seek the future replacement of this bridge to improve flood management issues).
- The impacts associated with a major earthquake could also be significant for this transport corridor.

The Council suggests that some explicit mention of natural hazards should be included in the 'Land Use and Transport Integration' section of the corridor plan with reference to the Hutt River Floodplain Management Plan. It would also be useful for the plan to include a more specific project to progress investigation and planning for responding to future risks associated with climate change and natural hazards.

The Council recognises the importance of network resilience and supports projects in the draft plan that will assist with better network resilience by providing transport options or route alternatives.

Measures in the Draft Plan

Greater Wellington strongly supports the public transport measures outlined in the draft plan, including the package of rail improvements and the upcoming Public Transport Review for the Hutt services.

The Council supports some further investigation of high occupancy vehicle lanes as a network wide approach - to identify if there is any potential for these facilities to be successfully implemented on the wider road network, including the Hutt Corridor. This is consistent with objectives to look for ways to use the existing network more efficiently and would have a good fit with the Regional Travel Demand Management Strategy.

Consistent with improving network resilience, east-west links, and connecting key population and employment centres, the Council supports progressing the 'Petone Package' as outlined in the draft plan, including a new Petone to Grenada link and an upgraded Petone interchange. We also recognise the need to continue to look for solutions to accommodate the projected significant increase in freight along the corridor from Seaview/Gracefield to Petone, and on to the Port.

The Council strongly supports the strategic walking and cycling improvements in the draft plan which are consistent with the RLTS objective of increasing walking and cycling mode share. In

particular, we support the Petone to Ngauranga cycleway completion which would complete an existing gap in our strategic cycle network. We would like to see the investigation of this project brought forward if possible and implementation as soon as possible. It would also be useful if the plan identified the need to progress the implementation of the wider Great Harbour Way concept in the longer term.

Improving road safety is a key outcome of the RLTS and the Council notes that those projects in the plan to upgrade signalised 'at-grade' intersections along State Highway 2 (eg. Melling and Kennedy Good) will have significant safety benefits along this key strategic route through the Hutt Valley, in addition to congestion relief. As such, the Council is disappointed that the timing of these projects is not sooner.

Conclusion

In general, the Council supports the overall objectives of the draft corridor plan, in addition to the package of improvement projects and associated timings.

However, the Council would like to see the commentary and actions relating to climate change and natural hazards strengthened in the plan. It also calls for advancing the timing of some projects in the draft plan.

Yours faithfully

Peter Glensor
Chair, Economic Wellbeing Committee