

Submission from Greater Wellington Regional Council on *Toward 2040: Smart Green Wellington*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on *Toward 2040: Smart Green Wellington* (Wellington 2040).

Greater Wellington's submission covers matters of regional interest - focusing initially on the scope and overall role of Wellington 2040 within a regional context and the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS), and then provides more focused comments about areas relevant to Greater Wellington business.

1. Nature and scope of Wellington 2040 within a regional context

Understanding the scope of Wellington 2040 was a challenge during the preparation of this submission. Part of the uncertainty around scope stemmed from the variable style, scale and nature of the three key elements that make up Wellington 2040:

- The high level strategy (*Toward 2040: Smart Green Wellington*) - is written as a document for Wellington City but is reliant on, and covers many topic areas of relevance, to the wider region.
- The Central City Framework – has a narrow focus on the urban and built form of the Central City and is much more detailed in its approach both in terms of recommendations, catalyst projects and policy initiatives.
- The Digital Strategy – provides high level recommendations and actions aimed at making Wellington globally recognised as a creative digital city. The Digital Strategy is highly relevant to the wider region, but in its current form only applies to Wellington City.

All of these documents relate to matters of regional significance in some form or another. The high level strategy and the Digital Strategy read much like regional documents, but with a narrower focus on Wellington City or Central City areas only. This combination of styles and scales is confusing to the reader - particularly in relation to how they fit within the overall regional context.

Associated with this is the question of how these documents relate to the WRS. Clearly Wellington 2040 aligns in many areas, but it could also be considered to duplicate much of what the WRS is set up to do. This will need to be considered in the upcoming refresh of the WRS.

Understanding the scope of Wellington 2040 is also made difficult by the scale and range of recommendations and actions across the key documents (70+ in the high level strategy, 100+ in the Central City Framework and 18 in the Digital Strategy). Priorities are not set out in any of the documents, which make it difficult to know where WCC proposes to focus in terms of decision making and resource allocation. This makes commenting on the suite of documents challenging.

Actions sought:

- Include commentary in the 2040 document on its relationship within the regional context, particularly the connections with the WRS.
- Additional information of where priority lies to provide some indication of where actions will be focused.

2. High level strategy – smart green Wellington

The high level strategy is the main consultation document – setting out the overall vision is for a ‘smart green Wellington’ set around 4 goals (people centred city, connected city, eco-city and dynamic central city).

Greater Wellington endorses the overall aim ...*to build resilience – economic and social, physical and environmental.* It is considered that in general, the vision for a *smart green Wellington* and the goals based around a *people centred city, connected city, eco-city and dynamic central city* respond well to the current and expected future challenges facing Wellington City (and in many cases the wider region).

What is perhaps not well recognised, however, is that success in achieving the vision and goals is also dependant on players and factors outside Wellington City – and this should be better recognised in the final strategy.

The implications of this run both ways. Many workers, businesses and organisations located outside Wellington City’s boundary are reliant on Wellington City (in particular the CBD) as the economic powerhouse for the region. The flip side of this is that the City cannot advance as a smart green and vibrant city without the connections and input from a wide range of players outside the city – including the science and research sector, many of which are located outside Wellington City.

The importance of these connections (from a workforce perspective) can be seen from the table below showing 2006 Census data on journey to work in the Wellington region. This illustrates the dynamic nature of work places and shows that over 30,000 people travel to Wellington City from other destinations and that there is flow in the other direction as well.

Usual residence	Commuting destination (workplace address)								
	Kapiti Coast District	Porirua City	Upper Hutt City	Lower Hutt City	Wellington City	Masterton District	Carterton District	South Wairarapa District	
Kapiti Coast District	10,490	880	170	760	3,770	20	10	20	5,630
Porirua City	260	7,780	300	1,450	8,190	20	10	10	10,240
Upper Hutt City	50	400	7,320	4,050	3,990	40	10	20	8,560
Lower Hutt City	110	680	1,490	24,600	13,520	70	50	50	15,970
Wellington City	280	2,620	630	5,260	79,150	170	100	80	9,140
Masterton District	10	10	40	90	210	7,590	680	210	1250
Carterton District	0	0	40	80	200	820	1,600	260	1400
South Wairarapa District	0	20	90	160	450	330	170	2,490	1220
	710	4,610	2,760	11,850	30,330	1470	1030	650	

... commute TO this destination

... commute FROM this destination

Work at home

Actions sought:

- Improved recognition of the role of the wider region in achieving the vision and goals of Wellington 2040.

3. Integration of transport and landuse planning, and infrastructure investment (including public transport)

The goal statements in the high level strategy acknowledge the importance of connecting places and supporting effective and efficient regional, national and international infrastructure. It also acknowledges the need to continue to improve the city's public transport and pedestrian/cycling infrastructure. These statements are supported.

While these statements are a good starting point, the information in both the high level strategy and the Central City Framework provide little guidance on how transport plans might be integrated with existing and future landuse patterns in the city, or where priority should be focussed in terms of future infrastructure investment.

This is of major interest to Greater Wellington given the current focus and significant levels of investment (by GW, NZTA and WCC) in key projects coming from the Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan (tunnels, quays, Basin to Wellington Rd and the Public Transport spine study). All of these projects have been guided by the integrated concept of the 'growth spine' set out in WCC's previous transport and urban development strategies and incorporated into the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy. We assume that the 'growth spine' as an integrated transport and landuse concept is still valid.

Associated with this, more explicit provision for public transport in the Central City Framework would help Greater Wellington to effectively carry out our responsibilities associated to improving the Wellington City bus network. We also believe this would aid WCC when upgrading public transport infrastructure such as shelters, road maintenance and design, and street furniture. It is noted that initial 2040 survey carried out in 2009 identified issues around public transport as the primary concern from the public.

Actions sought:

- Further guidance on the integration of landuse and transport planning to pragmatically guide decision making and resource allocation related to transport infrastructure investment.
- Explicit provision for the role of public transport in the overall future of Wellington City and guidance to assist public transport planning and infrastructure investment for both GW and WCC.

4. Resilience

The stated purpose of developing the Wellington 2040 strategy is *...to build resilience – economic and social, physical and environmental*. This is supported as it recognises the need for cities to be adaptable and prepared for a wide range of futures.

One aspect of resilience that appears not to have been picked up, however, relates to earthquake prone buildings. Recent events in Christchurch have resulted in a raised awareness of the risks associated with earthquake prone buildings along with a heightened sense of urgency to improve resilience. The need for action in this area should be referred to in the high level strategy, possibly in the section headed *a sustainable and resilient city centre* as the majority of earthquake prone buildings are located in the Central City.

Earthquake prone buildings (and supporting infrastructure) should also be a key consideration within the Central City Framework, given its purpose to *... guide the physical outcomes of the Central City*.

Actions sought:

- Recognise issues associated with earthquake prone buildings in the high level strategy combined with guidance on how to respond to these issues, particularly through the Central City Framework.

5. Digital strategy

The Digital Strategy is a concise and legible approach aimed at making Wellington *...globally recognised as a creative digital city*.

While written for a Wellington City audience, the aims, actions and outcomes are relevant to the region as a whole. This is further acknowledged through the link to the regional economic development agency Grow Wellington (as a lead player) in several of the implementation actions.

Given the nature of this document and its relevance to the wider region, an opportunity exists to avoid duplication and endorse or build on the Digital Strategy as a region wide initiative. It certainly has a high level of fit within the WRS and is directly linked in with the current Broadband initiative.

Actions sought:

- Consider approaches (possibly as part of the WRS refresh) to endorse or build on the Digital Strategy as a collaborative region wide strategy.

6. Central City Framework

Much importance is placed on the primacy of the Central City in all documents that make up Wellington 2040. This is acknowledged and supported as the Central City is the regional focus and economic powerhouse of the region. As part of this the Central City Framework is put forward as a key document for achieving a dynamic central city and is described as a ... *'spatial structure plan' that will guide the physical outcomes for the central city and an associated 'implementation plan'*.

The analysis and recommendations in the Central City Framework focus on street structure, spaces, pedestrian access and built form based on a strong urban design philosophy. The recognition of an urban design philosophy is supported and in line with the WRS and the objectives and policies of the Regional Policy Statement.

As noted earlier in the submission, there are considerable recommendations and things that need doing within the Central City Framework – but with little prioritisation. Many recommendations (particularly with the catalyst projects) affect private property and have significant cost implications – some of which will affect areas of Greater Wellington responsibility (e.g. public transport). An indication of feasibility of these catalyst projects and the likely investment required to realise these outcomes would help Greater Wellington to plan for any likely changes in the future.

Actions sought:

- Feasibility analysis of catalyst projects to assist prioritisation and clarify the likely implications for key players (including Greater Wellington).

7. Conclusion

The combined documents that make up Wellington 2040 represent a significant amount of strategising and thinking about what's needed for Wellington City over the next 30 years.

Collaboration, relationships and linkages with key players is a strong theme throughout the high level strategy (particularly the connected city section). This is supported by Greater Wellington given the scale and broad based nature of Wellington 2040 and interconnectedness of the goals to influences outside WCC and the wider region. We hope that improved recognition of the regional context and fit the WRS can be included in future iterations of the Wellington 2040 strategy.

