

Report 14.228
Date 29 April 2014
File TP/01/18/04

Committee Regional Transport Committee
Author Mark Edwards, Senior Transport Planner

Approval of significant activities policy and prioritisation methodology for the Regional Land Transport Plan 2015

1. Purpose

This report outlines the proposed prioritisation policy and methodology to be applied to significant activities in the Regional Land Transport Plan 2015 (RLTP).

2. Background

The next RLTP will bring together the existing Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) and Regional Land Transport Programme in one document to reflect changes to the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (the Act) which were enacted in 2013.

The RLTP will be considered for adoption in April 2015 and will have two main elements: the Regional Network Plan

The RLTP will have two main elements: the Regional Network Plan and the Regional Programme.

The Regional Programme sets out the programme of proposed land transport activities over a six year period. It includes a statement of transport priorities for the region over the next ten financial years, a ten year financial forecast and policies such as the prioritisation policy and significance policy.

3. Regional Programme – Proposed Prioritisation policy

The purpose of the policy is to establish a methodology to determine the relative priority of “Significant Activities” to be included in the RLTP. The prioritisation of significant activities is required by section 16 of the Act.

The current RLTS includes a prioritisation policy to guide the Committee's prioritisation of projects and programmes in the RTLTP. These have been revised to reflect updated terminology as a result of the changes to the Act and are set out in **Attachment 1**.

4. Regional Programme - Prioritisation Methodology

The purpose of the prioritisation methodology is to describe and explain how assessments are undertaken for individual significant activities. In addition the methodology describes how the assessment is then used in order to determine the relative priority of "Significant Activities" to be included in the RLTP as required by section 16 of the Act.

A prioritisation methodology has been used in the development of previous regional land transport programmes consistent with the prioritisation policy. This methodology has proved robust and capable of reflecting regionally important land transport activities in the past. It is proposed that the methodology be retained but updated to reflect recent legislative changes to the Act. The proposed changes are relatively minor, and the proposed methodology is included as **Attachment 2**.

The main legislative change in relation to prioritisation is that a number of activities previously subject to prioritisation are no longer part of the prioritisation process (such as new minor walking and cycling projects).

Non-prioritised activities include:

- certain business as usual activities
- activities that maintain existing service levels; and
- low cost activities (<\$5million).

"Significant Activities" are defined by the significance policy (Report 14.227 refers). They are generally the large new improvement projects with a total cost of more than \$5million.

As set out in the prioritisation policy in **Attachment 1**, the prioritisation of significant activities considers:

- strategic fit
- effectiveness; and
- economic efficiency.

The method and definitions for assessing strategic fit and economic efficiency are the same as those used by the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA); however the definition of effectiveness is different, providing a regional perspective to the prioritisation process.

The method for assessing "regional" effectiveness involves testing activities against the regionally agreed strategic objectives and outcomes. By comparison, the NZTA evaluation measures effectiveness against delivery of

strategic fit. The use of this regionally orientated effectiveness allows regional importance to be captured and reflected in the RLTP. It is reflective not only of the important regional outcomes that have been agreed and are desired, but also seeks to determine the degree to which projects and activities promoted by Approved Organisations enable the delivery of these regional priorities and the vision contained in the regional policy framework.

The regional objectives and outcomes proposed to be used in the methodology will be based on those in the RLTS but updated to form part of the RLTP. This includes a new 'resilience' outcome reflecting the importance of resilience to the region.

The funding of RLTP projects is expected to commence with the committed, automatically included and non-prioritised projects as these represent the operation, management and optimisation of the existing transport network before funding "significant activities". There may be some need to prioritise significant activities but this is undertaken within the RLTP prioritisation methodology for significant activities.

The methodology is a tool applied by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in order to provide the Committee with a draft list of the large new improvement projects in priority order for their consideration. The TAG is comprised of officers from GWRC, NZTA and all local councils in the region.

5. Timeline

The final RLTP, once agreed by this Committee and approved by GWRC, must be submitted by 30 April 2015 to the NZTA. NZTA must take account of the regional priorities set out in a RLTP when making its funding decisions as part of the NLTP development process. The NLTP currently retains a 3 year focus despite a requirement now for a 6 year RLTP programme.

6. Communication

No communication is required. A plan for consultation on the draft RLTP will be reported to the Committee in August 2014.

7. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the LGA). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

7.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires GWRC to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the LGA.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

The subject matter of this paper, namely the proposed RLTP prioritisation policy, amends and updates existing Council policy without significantly changing the content or purpose of that policy. Various elements of the draft RLTP programme, generated as a result of the application of the prioritisation methodology, will be considered at future meetings of the Committee.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

8. Recommendations

That the Regional Transport Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Approves the updated prioritisation policy as set out in **Attachment 1** to this report.*
4. *Approves the prioritisation methodology, as set out in **Attachment 2**, for inclusion in the RLTP to apply in prioritising projects and activities that are regionally significant.*
5. *Notes the TAG will apply the policy in prioritising projects and activities that are regionally significant and will provide the outcome of that work to RTC.*

Report prepared by:

Mark Edwards
Senior Transport Planner.
Strategy and Community
Engagement

Report approved by:

Luke Troy
Manager, Corporate
Planning, Strategy and
Community Engagement

Report approved by:

Jane Davis
General Manager, Strategy
and Community
Engagement

Attachment 1: Regional Land Transport Programme 2015-21 prioritisation policy

Attachment 2: Regional Land Transport Programme 2015-21 prioritisation methodology