

“Here to there”

A summary of the proposed Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010-2040

Have your say by using the FREEPOST form on the back page

FEBRUARY 2010

Have your say



What is the Regional Land Transport Strategy?

The proposed Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) sets the framework for future transport policy and planning. That framework includes a vision, objectives and outcomes that guide the development of the region’s transport network over the next 30 years. This includes walking, cycling, public transport, state highways and local roads.

The proposed RLTS describes the pressures and issues facing our transport network and how we think we will invest in it to move the Wellington region toward our vision.

This publication is a summary of the full proposed RLTS. It is important for our region’s transport network to be developed in a way that is safe, sustainable and meets the needs and aspirations of our communities. That way the Wellington region will be an even better place to live, work and play.

Our transport network will continue to play a vital role in the future success and sustainability of our region. We encourage you to take this opportunity to let us know what you think about the long-term direction described in the proposed RLTS.

WHO DEVELOPS THE RLTS?

The RLTS is developed by the Wellington Regional Transport Committee, a standing committee of the Greater Wellington Regional Council. The committee is made up of representatives from Greater Wellington, all local councils in the region, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and individuals representing access and mobility, economic development, public health, safety and personal security, environmental sustainability and cultural interests.

Our vision

To deliver an integrated land transport system that supports the region’s people and prosperity in a way that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

Our key outcomes and targets

The following table lists the key outcomes and the proposed targets set to signal the region's aspiration and the magnitude of change we are seeking out to 2020.

KEY OUTCOME	2020 STRATEGIC TARGET
Increased peak period public transport mode share	Public transport accounts for at least 23 million peak period trips per annum (17.5 million in 2008 / 09)
	Public transport accounts for at least 21% of all region wide journey to work trips (17% in 2006)
Increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists	Increase active mode use to at least 30% of all trips in urban areas. (25% for 2004-08)
	Active modes account for at least 16% of region wide journey to work trips (13% in 2006)
Reduced greenhouse gas emissions	Transport generated CO ₂ emissions will be maintained below year 2001 levels (1,057 kilotonnes in 2001; and 1,084 in 2009)
Reduced severe road congestion	Average congestion on selected roads will remain below year 2003 levels despite traffic growth (20 seconds delay / km in 2003; 21 seconds in 2009)
Improved regional road safety	There are no road crash fatalities attributable to roading network deficiencies
	Continuous reduction in the number of killed and seriously injured on the region's roads (376 killed and seriously injured in 2008; lowest was 316 in 2003)
Improved land use and transport integration (in line with the WRS and local authority urban development strategies)	All new subdivisions and developments include provision for walking, cycling and public transport as appropriate
Improved regional freight efficiency	Improved road journey times for freight traffic between key destinations
INTER-REGIONAL OUTCOME	
Improved safety, efficiency and reliability of strategic road, public transport and freight links to the north of the region	Progress measured using information collected for congestion (4.1), reliability (4.3), safety (5.1) and inter-regional freight (7.2)

This framework is supported by other related outcomes and targets as well as policies. Policies detail how the region intends to respond to the pressures and issues facing its land transport network.

The full proposed RLTS available on Greater Wellington's website or by request.

How did we get here?

Through extensive consultation during the development of our current RLTS, the region agreed on the fundamental things we want the transport network to achieve. These things are not considered to have changed significantly over the past few years. This means that our vision, objectives and outcomes are proposed to stay largely the same.

Why do we need a new strategy?

This RLTS 2010–2040 will replace the RLTS 2007–2016. A new strategy is required by legislation and because there have been several changes since 2007.

A new way of prioritising transport funding is now in place. The new government has also set a different long-term direction for transport nationally since the adoption of the current RLTS. This includes new short to medium-term national outcomes, and the identification of several roads of national significance (RoNS) – one of which is State Highway 1 in the Wellington region.

We have taken account of this direction through new regional targets and a renewed emphasis on economic growth and productivity.

What are the key pressures on transport?

The proposed RLTS identifies a number of pressures for the transport network. Many of these are likely to result in an increasing demand for travel and a need to invest in our transport network in response. Some of the key pressures are:

Population and household growth

The region is forecast to experience moderate population growth, with an extra 42,000 people expected to live here by 2026, a 9% increase from 2009. Further out, population projections become more uncertain. However, under a medium-growth scenario the regional population growth rate is projected to slow after 2026. Under a high-growth scenario the total population may reach 600,000 by 2041.

The number of households is also expected to grow, with household sizes getting smaller. This is likely to result in increased in travel demand, even with new technologies and initiatives that help us reduce the need to travel.

Aging population

Like national and international trends, our regional population is ageing with a high and growing proportion of people aged over 65. People in this age group tend to rely more on public transport than the general population. This is expected to put more pressure on the region's public transport services.

Economic growth

In 2008 the Wellington region contributed around 13% of New Zealand's GDP. The region's economy is expected to continue growing at a modest rate, driving an increasing demand for travel and freight movement. Freight movements are projected to double in the Wellington region over the life of this proposed RLTS.

Fuel prices

Fuel prices are expected to continue to be volatile and continue to rise over the next 30 years.

Increasing travel demand

Good accessibility as well as the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services are crucial to our region's success. Increasing travel demand can result in a number of issues for our transport network, including congestion, road safety, greenhouse gas emissions and network reliability.

Road freight is forecasted to significantly increase. This movement of freight will also be negatively affected by severe traffic congestion and poor reliability. Road freight is also likely to be a large contributor to the region's greenhouse gas emissions.



The proposed strategy for addressing these challenges

In developing the proposed RLTS, work was carried out to identify the best approach for investment in the region's land transport network over the next 30 years. It is important to note that this preferred approach is not a list of projects that we intend to complete over that time. A number of background technical reports on this work is available on our website.

Six high-level options for a 2040 transport network were developed based on different ways we might invest in the network and how tools such as road pricing might be used.

Nine scenarios were created to take account of the key things outside the RLTS's influence that will affect the demand for transport. These things were growth (economic and population), transport costs and land use (higher density development versus low density sprawl).

The six options were tested against the nine scenarios to see how well each option performed regarding the region's desired outcomes for congestion relief, public transport use and greenhouse gas emissions.

The mixed investment option (a combination of public transport and roading projects) had the best results across the desired outcomes. However, even this mixed approach does not effectively deal with growing transport demand and increasing greenhouse gas emissions under higher-growth scenarios.

Therefore, depending on the level of future growth, a road pricing scheme (such as a charge for entering the Wellington CBD at the busiest times) could be considered to help achieve our outcomes or to defer large investment in new projects. Currently, legislation does not allow road pricing.

The preferred approach is to therefore continue promoting investment in public transport, roads, walking and cycling, while continuing to advocate for road pricing if it is needed.

How do we get there?

The RLTS is a high-level strategy that provides the framework and long-term direction for developing the transport network. It is not the purpose of the RLTS to identify specific projects and activities to be completed over the next 30 years.

Greater Wellington (partnered with key stakeholders) develops separate, more detailed plans under the RLTS framework. It is these plans that identify projects and activities to address current and anticipated needs. These plans are reviewed separately every five years.

Projects identified in the plans are considered for funding by the three-yearly Regional Land Transport Programme process based on identified needs at the time. This allows for greater flexibility and more up-to-date information in our planning for specific projects and activities.

What funding might be available?

The proposed RLTS is required to take account of the funding that is likely to be available over the 30-year period it covers.

We don't have any information about the amount of funding that will be available for transport in our region after 2019. But we do know that in the past there has been a gap between costs and available funding.

The proposed RLTS takes account of this by acknowledging that funding is limited and that we must prioritise projects and make choices about what outcomes are important to the region. It also suggests looking at other possible sources of funding (such as tolls) for likely future shortfalls.

The proposed RLTS includes a policy to guide the priority of projects and activities in the three-yearly Regional Land Transport Programme requests for funding:

- First-priority activities maintain the existing transport network and meet legal requirements
- Second-priority activities are relatively low cost studies, and minor safety and other improvement works (costing less than \$4.5 million)
- Third-priority activities are the high-cost large new projects (costing more than \$4.5 million)

The purpose of the Regional Land Transport Programme is the setting of regional priorities and funding estimates. As part of the current Programme, the NZ Transport Agency has estimated an additional \$2 billion dollars to be spent on RoNS projects in the region.

What improvements can we expect?

Under the long-term direction provided by the proposed RLTS, the following improvements to the region's transport network can be expected:

- Improvements in road safety for all road users throughout the region
- Improvements to the safety and reliability of access along the Wellington Road of National Significance (including the Transmission Gully section of State Highway 1)
- Improvements to the safety and reliability of access along State Highway 1 through the region
- Improved access to the Wellington CBD, the regional hospital in Newtown, Wellington's port and airport
- Region-wide improvements to the public transport network, including real-time information, integrated tickets, as well as service and infrastructure improvements to the bus and rail networks
- Development of a high-quality public transport spine from Wellington Railway Station through to the regional hospital and airport
- Improvements to walking and cycling networks. Education, promotion and awareness programmes for walking and cycling
- Better use of the existing transport network and more travel options
- Improvements in journey time reliability – for public transport and the road network
- Less severe traffic congestion on our roads, particularly at peak times
- Improved connections between State Highway 1 and State Highway 2 for people and freight
- Improved rail freight opportunities
- Better integration between transport options
- Improved information for all transport network users

HOW WILL THE PROPOSED RLTS CONTRIBUTE TO ROAD SAFETY?

The proposed RLTS seeks to improve regional road safety, including for pedestrians and cyclists, and targets a significant reduction in road crashes. Contributing to this outcome will involve a combination of measures such as enforcement, education, advocacy and promotion, and engineering. A new Regional Road Safety Plan was developed in 2009 to identify specific measures and responsibilities.

HOW DOES THE PROPOSED RLTS ENCOURAGE INTEGRATING LAND USE AND TRANSPORT?

The proposed RLTS encourages integrating land use and transport infrastructure by reflecting sustainable land use principles. This includes the importance of higher-density housing and development close to city centres and public transport links, and the need to encourage local employment opportunities and facilities to improve travel choices and reduce travel demand. The proposed RLTS also seeks to provide for walking, cycling and public transport use within all new land development.

HOW DOES THE PROPOSED RLTS SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY?

The reliable and effective movement of people, goods and services is crucial to ensuring continued economic growth and prosperity. The proposed RLTS recognises the importance of good access to the Wellington CBD and other regional centres, the port and airport. It recognises the regional and national significance of State Highway 1 in providing access to key employment, freight and tourism destinations. The need for new and improved east-west transport links is also identified as important to connect key freight destinations.

HOW DOES THE PROPOSED RLTS ADDRESS TRAFFIC CONGESTION?

Traffic congestion can have a significant negative impact on access and mobility, and therefore our economy. In the Wellington region we are well placed to provide public transport as an efficient way of moving people to the CBD and between the region's centres. Many of the region's urban areas run along key transport corridors, making public transport a good option for commuting to work and thereby reducing severe congestion. In addition, encouraging short-distance walking and cycling, easing key traffic bottlenecks, improving the efficiency of the existing road network, and advocating for road pricing as a longer-term option also seeks to address congestion issues.

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

The Wellington region's contribution to reducing transport-related greenhouse gas emissions is only a small part of a wider national commitment. Wellington's transport network contributes about 1.5% of national greenhouse gas emissions. However, the need for the region to play its part in reducing its share of emissions is recognised. While improvements in fuel efficiency and advances in the availability of alternative fuels are likely to be the key contributors to reducing transport generated emissions, well utilised and efficient public transport services will also have a role. Looking for efficiency improvements in the heavy vehicle fleet will also be important given they are a fast growing market segment. Climate change is likely to have an impact on the transport sector through increased rain, higher sea levels and more frequent storms. Considering the potential impacts of climate change and our ability to adapt to them will also be important.

HOW HAVE WE TAKEN ACCOUNT OF RISING FUEL COSTS?

Fuel prices are expected to be volatile and continue to rise over the next 30 years. At the regional level, encouraging the use of walking and cycling, providing public transport and promoting more efficient land planning are key to addressing this issue. For longer journeys, public transport is expected to have an important role in providing an affordable travel option – particularly with an increasing proportion of electric trains and buses in our region. Having good travel choices and alternatives to cars will make us more resilient to changes in fuel prices while new technologies are being developed and until such time as alternative fuels or electric vehicles become widely available. However, the proposed RLTS recognises that road-based transport will likely continue to be the dominant means of travel in the future.

TIMELINE

March 2010 – Consultation starts

April 2010 – Consultation closes

May 2010 – Public hearings

June 2010 – RLTS finalised and adopted

For more information

See www.gw.govt.nz/rlts2010 to read or download the full proposed RLTS.

To request a printed copy of the current or proposed RLTS, phone 04 802 0301 or get a free copy from Greater Wellington's offices at 142 Wakefield Street, Wellington, or 34 Chapel Street, Masterton.

Alternatively, visit your local council or local library to view a copy.

Have your say

Submissions must be received in writing by no later than 5pm **on 23 April 2010**.

- Send the submission on the back page, or
- Make an online submission at www.gw.govt.nz/rlts2010
- Write to us at:
Wellington RLTS Submissions
Freepost 3156
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Manners Street
Wellington 6142
- Email your submission to info@gw.govt.nz

Please make sure you include your name, address and phone number, and if you wish to be heard in support of your submission.

If you indicate in your submission that you would like to speak in support of your submission, you will be contacted about a suitable time once hearing dates have been confirmed.

Please note that any submission you make may become publicly available if a request for it is made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

If you are making a submission as an individual, Greater Wellington will consider removing your personal details if you request this in your submission.

If you need further information regarding the draft strategy or submission process, please email info@gw.govt.nz or phone 04 802 0301.