
REPORT 1
(1215/52/IM)

COUNCIL POSITION ON THE WESTERN CORRIDOR PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

To brief Councillors on the main findings of the Hearings Subcommittee report on the draft Western Corridor Plan (WCP)¹ and consider the implications for Council's position on this issue.

The Council's submission on the draft plan was approved by this Committee on 3 November 2005. The CEO has approved bringing this matter back before Council due to new information becoming available. The next major decision-making step (a Regional Land Transport Committee meeting) is on 11 April 2006. An agreed Council position would guide the Mayor, as Council's representative on that Committee, in those discussions.

2. Executive Summary

In November 2005 Council agreed a submission to the Hearings Subcommittee on the draft Western Corridor Plan. The submission supported the Coastal Route option proposed in the consultation document, but stated it should be achieved through an incremental upgrade.

The Hearings Subcommittee was formed to receive submissions and to make findings on the Western Corridor Plan. The Subcommittee received a large number of submissions, which were overwhelmingly in favour of a plan based around the Transmission Gully option. Their report released on 8 March 2006 found that Transmission Gully was the most appropriate option for the Western Corridor.

Additional reports that informed the Hearings Subcommittee on consenting feasibility, project costings, and public opinion have also been released since Council formed its view on the draft Plan. These reports have provided greater clarity around the key issues and impacts of proposed projects, and reflected majority public opinion support from residents both in Wellington City and the region for Transmission Gully.

¹ A Western Corridor Transportation Study was used to develop the Plan. This paper generally uses the Western Corridor Plan (WCP) terminology. When formally adopted, the WCP will form part of the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS).

We still have concerns about the technical aspects of the Hearings Subcommittee report but in light of having agreed to the process and the clear public support for Transmission Gully, it is recommended that Council amend its position on the draft Western Corridor Plan.

Wellington City prides itself on good process. Part of good process is accepting the results of that process.

It is recommended Council accept the main conclusion of the Hearings Subcommittee that Transmission Gully should proceed without delay but with the proviso that its construction does not compromise projects required to meet the transport needs of other communities in the region.

An important aspect of the Hearings Subcommittee report is that it treats Transmission Gully as a special case by recommending that different assessment criteria be applied to the approvals process for this project. The report is ambiguous as to whether or not Transmission Gully could be funded under current criteria.

The recommended Council position promotes development of new criteria that recognise the special nature of this project. To avoid delays, Land Transport New Zealand and Transit need to urgently evaluate the project with a view to developing funding criteria for special strategic projects. This may provide the avenue for Transmission Gully to be funded without impacting on other transport projects in the region. In any case, in the interests of the region, Wellington City strongly advocates that the completion of transport projects in the Ngauranga to Airport Corridor and the proposed Grenada to Hutt link cannot be compromised.

Council should also seek assurances from Porirua City Council and Kapiti Coast District Council that they will implement land use controls to minimise any urban sprawl impacts along the Transmission Gully route.

A revised Council position could be presented at the 11 April 2006 Regional Land Transport Committee, which the Mayor attends as Council representative. The recommendations of that Committee will be considered by Greater Wellington Regional Council in late April, and by the Transit Board in early May.

More work will be needed to finalise the specific projects in the Regional Land Transport Strategy, confirm funding approvals and achieve resource consents for specific projects. This work is seen as a high priority by communities in the region, with an increased level of transport infrastructure funding needed to support regional growth and development.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree to review the Council's position on the Western Corridor Plan, last considered on 3 November 2005.*

3. *Note the new information received since the Committee last considered its position on the Western Corridor Plan on 3 November 2005 including:*
 - *the Western Corridor Plan Hearings Subcommittee report dated March 2006*
 - *the Treasury report clarifying costings and packages dated February 2006*
 - *the Consenting Strategy report dated February 2006*
 - *the DMB Research Public Opinion Survey report dated February 2006.*
4. *Agree to recommend to Council the following position on the Western Corridor Plan:*
 - (i) *Note Council agreed to the Hearings Subcommittee process to consider the Western Corridor options.*
 - (ii) *Note the overwhelming public support for Transmission Gully to proceed without delay.*
 - (iii) *In light of having agreed to the process and the clear public support, accept the main conclusion of the Hearings Subcommittee that Transmission Gully should proceed without delay.*
 - (iv) *Note that while the Hearings Subcommittee has found that Transmission Gully performs poorly against existing benefit-cost ratio criteria, it takes a wider view and identifies the need to change funding criteria in the case of such “critical, strategic and special” projects.*
 - (v) *Note that the Hearings Subcommittee found that Transmission Gully had unique characteristics that warrant this status which might include:*
 - *its strategic importance to maintain a link between the North and South Islands and access to the Capital, a city vulnerable to earthquake risk;*
 - *its strategic importance as a project that supports the future growth of the region;*
 - *the scale of the project and unsuitability for staged construction which makes it difficult to accommodate in a 10 or even 20 year roading programme;*
 - *the difficult terrain for construction that potentially puts it beyond the means of the regional community.*
 - (vi) *Support Transit and Land Transport New Zealand developing a case for new funding criteria for “critical, strategic and special” projects and any necessary changes to funding mechanisms and legislation.*
 - (vii) *Agree on the condition that Transmission Gully should not be funded at the expense of essential roading projects required to meet the transport needs of all communities in the region and ensure their future growth and prosperity.*
 - (viii) *Agree that in particular, projects in the Ngauranga to Airport Corridor must not be compromised.*

- (ix) *Agree that in particular, the proposed Grenada to Hutt Valley link must not be compromised.*
 - (x) *Agree to seek concrete assurances from local authorities along the new route to introduce regulatory controls and other measures to manage any impacts of urban sprawl.*
5. *Agree that the Mayor convey the agreed position to the Regional Land Transport Committee meeting scheduled for 11 April 2006.*

4. Background

4.1 Council's historical Western Corridor position

Wellington City Council has maintained a keen interest and close involvement in the planning process used to decide major Wellington region transport investments. Plans for the Western Corridor are integral to that regional planning. For at least 20 years there has been a general understanding that Transmission Gully would eventually need to be built. It is only recently that a strategic choice has been necessary between continued upgrade of the Coastal Route and a plan based on the Transmission Gully project.

In 1995, the Council position on the Transmission Gully issue was to support its early completion as a nationally-funded State Highway project. Council passed the following resolutions on the project in that year:

- immediate safety improvements to the existing highway from Porirua to Paekakariki
- urgent upgrade of the Kapiti rail service
- early commencement of Transmission Gully
- changes in funding policies to recognise the need for strategic regional roading and public transport projects.

The vehicle for strategic regional transport planning decisions is the Regional Land Transport Strategy, but funding is ultimately decided by Transit and Land Transport New Zealand. The 1999 iteration of the Strategy (for the period 1999-2004) did not resolve the issue of the investment needed for the Western Corridor, and a separate plan for that corridor (effectively a chapter of the full Strategy) was consulted on in 2000. In its submission on that plan Council noted:

- the need for a vision for urban growth in the region
- the need for a balanced approach that included public transport
- the apparent poor benefit-cost ratio of the Transmission Gully project
- support for tolls for new roads
- the need for any local funding solutions such as rates or fuel taxes to be allocated on the basis of benefit received
- support for continued improvement to the existing route, leaving the Transmission Gully project open as a future option.

The context for this regional discussion was the gap in funding for what the region wanted to achieve in transport. Much of the discussion centered on ways of bridging that gap using funding tools such as tolls, a regional fuel tax or road pricing. There was a general acceptance that local solutions would need to be explored if the region wanted to move beyond the existing funding envelope.

In March 2001 Council made a submission on a funding options report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) and Sinclair Knight Mertz (SKM). This report identified a funding gap in three of four scenarios based on a range of assumptions. In the report to Council it was noted that:

The PWC/SKM Report significantly advances that discussion [of how to fund proposed Western Corridor projects], and clarifies the options and further work needed to finalise this funding framework. The key issue here is the possible “funding gap” [beyond tolls collected on a new route] which would need to be covered by local government (rates or regional petrol tax) or central government (a bigger central funding pool or a specific grant).

The outcome of this process was that the Council position remained essentially the same and the funding gap for Transmission Gully option remained unresolved.

At a further step in the process, Council supported, through a regional prioritisation process for planned projects, a full cost investigation for Transmission Gully. This occurred in 2004 and identified a likely cost increase from the 1998 estimate (used in the 2001 report) of \$245m, to an estimated \$830m (the latest estimate being \$994m)².

It should be noted that an agreed, costed and fundable transport plan for the region has not yet been achieved, but remains our overall objective. In this sense, past and current plans are hypothetical. There is a significant shortfall between what the community aspires to in transport investment and the resources available from both central government and local communities.

However, there is general agreement that the level of transport infrastructure investment (both roads and public transport) over recent decades has been inadequate, and a new, higher level of ongoing investment is required. This means an element of ‘catch-up’ as well as establishing a new level. We cannot pinpoint an exact ideal level of funding but despite the significant increase over the past few years, the current ‘funding gap’ in the draft Transit 10-year plan indicates that this issue remains unresolved, at least in the short term. This is discussed in more detail later in the report.

A further key issue is that an enormous amount of information and analysis has been required to fully understand the impacts and implications of this planning decision. In particular, the costs and feasibility of options and the impacts on the region’s long-term economic and physical growth. As a general principle, transport investment should support and be consistent with the region’s long-term vision for growth.

² The Subcommittee Report (section 5.9) appears to have confused the “expected estimate”, which is self-explanatory, with the 95th percentile estimate, which includes an additional contingency such that there is a 95% chance that the actual cost will be less. The expected estimate of \$994m is the \$1,090m consulted on less an adjustment from Transit when these costings were refined.

At each stage of the process, Council has carefully assessed the information available before arriving at its position. Clearly the lack of appropriate information has been a significant issue, as evidenced by planning on the basis of a \$245m cost for Transmission Gully in 2001, and a figure 240% higher when the costs were analysed³ in more detail.

4.2 Western Corridor Plan process – recent and next steps

In October last year the Regional Land Transport Committee (RLTC) of Greater Wellington Regional Council established a Hearings Subcommittee on the Proposed Western Corridor Plan. Its brief was to consider written and oral submissions and prepare a report of its findings for the RLTC and Transit New Zealand. The full details of the brief and process are contained in Annex 4 of the Subcommittee report which has been circulated to Councillors.

A critical difference this process had from some hearings processes was that the Subcommittee was tasked with analysing all available information and to make findings on a WCP.

The findings in the report were considered at the RLTC meeting on 13 March 2006 and approved in principle. The report will be further considered at the RLTC meeting on 11 April 2006 and the RLTC's recommendations will then go to the Regional Council on 27 April 2006. If the amended WCP is accepted by the Council, it will form part of the current Regional Land Transport Strategy. The Strategy has specific legal weight as a planning document but does not bind Transit or Land Transport New Zealand to particular projects. There is still some way to go before the findings of the report translate into a construction programme for new projects.

The Transit Board will consider the Subcommittee report separately at its meeting on 3 May 2006. If the report's recommendations are accepted by Transit, they will need to be incorporated in Transit's 10 Year State Highway Forecast. The Forecast for 2006/07 to 2016/17 is currently out for consultation, and is expected to be finalised for release in late June. It is unclear whether Transit intends to include its decisions on the WCP in the new 10 Year Plan or delay this until the following year. This also applies to the National Land Transport Programme for which Land Transport New Zealand is responsible.

Later this year the RLTC is planning to complete consultation on the draft (new) Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS). This consultation will primarily focus on how all the sub-strategies (eg Travel Demand Management, Cycling) and the corridor plans fit together. The draft RLTS will be considered at the RLTC on 31 October 2006.

One concern for Council is that the Ngauranga-Airport Strategic Study will not be completed until March next year, too late for its recommendations to be included in this iteration of the RLTS, although we expect that allowances for addressing key needs in the corridor will be included in the draft RLTS.

³ A significant factor in this increase was a more developed design for the road which included significant sections of causeway or elevated roadway. This was to minimise the extensive cuttings that would otherwise be needed and to mitigate earthquake risk.

Before being eligible for final construction funding, Transmission Gully will have to go through the following stages: complete geotechnical work, achieve all resource consents and complete final design and property acquisition. This is expected to take from 3 – 5 years. A longer timeframe is likely for the Grenada to Hutt Valley link as a considerable amount of work and consultation is required before a route is finalised. Detailed design, designation, consents and property acquisition all must be completed before construction can start.

4.3 Hearings Subcommittee Report

4.3.1 Process Overview

The process of consultation on the WCP, hearing of submissions, and analysis of existing material has been comprehensive. The Regional Land Transport Committee decided to support the Coastal Route as the preferred option for consultation, which created intense scrutiny of this option and generated significant public reaction. Over 6,000 written submissions were received and around 900 submitters asked to be heard. Many submitters presented detailed material to support their position.

Significantly, the Hearings Subcommittee was tasked with developing possible solutions, which meant that it reviewed all previous reports and studies, and had access to an unprecedented quantity and quality of information, including:

- a comprehensive range of technical information
- specific new reports on the costs and makeup of various ‘packages’ (Treasury), feasibility of consenting (Transit) and public opinion (DNB Research)
- the submissions themselves and supporting information.

The consultation on the draft WCP plan was extremely high profile but there was some confusion about the specific make-up of packages proposed, and the cost of projects. An independent review, promoted by this Council, was carried out by Treasury and clarified the issue.

Council signed up to the Hearings Subcommittee process and some of the major issues raised in Council’s November submission, such as seeking this clarification, and an appraisal of consenting feasibility, have now been adequately dealt with. The Subcommittee also received a detailed report on public support and willingness to pay which, despite the limitations of this type of research, used a large sample size⁴ and showed consistent results with other public opinion information.

Overall, the consultation process has been comprehensive and transparent. The Subcommittee systematically addressed all issues raised by submitters and although some of the reasoning for specific findings is questionable, the overall conclusions of the report are that:

⁴ 2,240 people from across the region.

- there is overwhelming public support from all communities in the region to progress a Western Corridor Plan that includes Transmission Gully, and opposition to a Coastal Route
- it is unlikely that all projects on the Coastal Route could be completed in a timely and cost-effective way, due to the need for extensive mitigation and the difficulty of obtaining consents in the face of strong opposition
- land use impacts of the Transmission Gully route can be mitigated
- Transmission Gully itself is a “special” project because of its strategic significance
- with the deferral or deletion of specific projects in the Western Corridor, an overall transport plan for the region appears achievable, provided the residual funding gap issue can be resolved.

4.3.2 Report Conclusions

Although the WCP is an integrated plan dealing with all modes of transport, the central and by far most critical decision is a choice between a plan based on the Coastal Route or on Transmission Gully.

As a result of its deliberations, the Hearings Subcommittee proposed an amended Western Corridor Plan. The main changes are as follows:

- Paraparaumu Bypass – *deleted*
- Otaihangā Interchange (Stage 2) – *deleted*
- Northern Expressway – *deleted*
- Paekakariki Interchange – *replaced with traffic lights*
- Centennial Highway 4 laning – *deleted*
- Transmission Gully Motorway – *added*
- Pukerua Bay Bypass – *replaced with safety improvements*
- Mana Bypass – *deleted*
- Whitford Brown Interchange – *deleted*
- Petone-Grenada Link – *replaced with Grenada-Gracefield Link*

Essentially this represents minimal improvements on the existing route, and deferral of some Kapiti Coast projects, in favour of a focus on early completion of Transmission Gully. Full details of the amended WCP are found on page 56 of the Subcommittee report.

5. Discussion

5.1 Issues raised by the Report

5.1.1 Strategic significance of projects

A major, and if accepted by the Government, watershed finding of the Hearings Subcommittee report is a challenge to the established decision-making criteria for major roading projects. The relevant quotes from the report are given below:

1.25 Based on advice received from Land Transport NZ, in our view the current allocation rules and practices, which reflect the provisions of the LTMA, are more

flexible than commonly perceived but *may need to be reviewed if they present a barrier to the accomplishment of critical, strategic and special projects*. We see no legal reason why the historic emphasis on benefit-cost ratios should prevail where they inhibit meeting the purposes of the LTMA for an “integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable land transport system”.

4.42 *There was also considerable concern expressed by submitters that TGM was seen as unaffordable because it, like many strategic, expensive infrastructural projects, presented a poor benefit-cost ratio (BCR)*. Both Professor Jackson in submission 5777 and Dr Rose made submissions on issues around the impact of discount rates. Both submitters noted that the application of discount rates prevailing in the United Kingdom (3.5% over 50 years) had a significant impact on the BCRs of both the Coastal Route Upgrade and TGM. (Emphasis added)

Taken together, these findings are in effect recommending that the criteria for road funding decisions be substantially amended for what the Hearings Subcommittee defines as “critical, strategic and special projects”.

A new category for ‘critical, strategic and special projects’ would need to be carefully defined if the objective was to progress Transmission Gully through the funding approvals process or attract additional funding. If this was not done, authorities elsewhere in New Zealand would no doubt claim this status for other projects.

The case for special funding criteria would hinge on the strategic nature of such projects. The rationale is that from time to time projects will come up that do not fit existing or purely rational criteria. They are groundbreaking with specific circumstances that make it difficult to achieve planning approval. While rare, this does happen in other countries and does not unduly distort existing decision-making frameworks. Examples such as major new bridges or roading connections often have a symbolic aspect, in that they provide linkages on a national scale.

It could be argued that the Transmission Gully project is strategic because of its influence on the future form and growth of the region, and the need to have modern, high capacity road connections for a crucial part of the State Highway network linking the islands and providing access to the Capital city. Therefore, the project would be in the national interest.

Its special circumstances could include the size and unsuitability of the project for staged construction, essentially making it a project with a 50 or 100 year time horizon, and the difficult nature of the terrain for construction.

The recommendations reflect the need to resolve the proposed special status of Transmission Gully, and support a regional effort to develop new funding criteria to address this. Note that this would not necessarily be a bid for additional funding, and would still be required to achieve approval of Transmission Gully from existing funding sources.

5.1.2 Land use and consenting issues

Concerns about the land use impacts of a major new road have been a consistent theme of Council’s position on the Western Corridor Plan. Essentially this is the impact of making it easier to commute long distances which results in “urban sprawl” and less

efficient land use. The ultimate cost to the community to provide infrastructure to support this less intensive land use can be high but such costs frequently only appear after several years.

The Western Corridor Plan as recommended by the Hearings Subcommittee would result in:

- downgrading the existing route to a “local road”, which could imply greater intensity of use along this corridor
- greater accessibility for green field development along the Transmission Gully route, particularly around Pauatahanui
- the possibility of accelerated growth on the Kapiti Coast if access to Wellington City was improved and
- greater access to land along a link between Grenada and the Hutt Valley.

The councils responsible for land use regulation in these areas are expected to consider land use controls through their District Plans and other measures to manage these effects, and have given some public assurances that they will move quickly to introduce these. These could take the form of, for example, rural zoning at Pauatahanui and a containment boundary on the Kapiti Coast. The recommendations in this paper seek to confirm these commitments and approve a Council position that controls are essential to address these impacts.

It should be noted that development pressures resulting from Transmission Gully may be so intense that the only way for effective control would be through land acquisition.

A consenting strategy for the Coastal Route was prepared by Transit and presented to the Hearings Subcommittee. The strategy does not rule out the possibility of consent being obtained but indicates there would be significant challenges. The assessment of the Hearings Subcommittee was that strong and sustained opposition would effectively make consenting of the Coastal Route impossible. However, this assumes completing the Coastal Route in total, as opposed to an incremental approach to both consenting and construction.

5.1.3 Funding availability

The report makes the following comments on the question of funding availability and the planning horizon:

3.28 We do not interpret the LTA as requiring the Region in developing its RLTS to be restricted to a 10 year vision. Nor do we consider that Parliament intended that the Region or any agency interpret the words ‘*funding likely to be available*’ to mean only the ‘guaranteed’ funding from national sources. We accept the view expressed by Land Transport NZ that a Regional view needs to be developed beyond 20 to 30 years for investment in long-term, strategic and expensive infrastructure. We have kept this advice in mind during our deliberations and in coming to our findings and conclusions about appropriate amendments to the proposed WCP.

5.8 In coming to our findings in relation to TGM, the Sub-committee has accepted that funding is certain for the first decade. *We have not identified the source of the funding for the completion of the Transmission Gully Motorway in the second ten year funding period. This will be a political decision to be made at the time (emphasis added).*

It is unrealistic to start construction of such a major project without a secure funding stream – a decision to begin the project is in effect a commitment to complete it. Building only the northern section of Transmission Gully would be an extremely poor option that would achieve very little benefit because of the consequential impacts on SH2 and its unattractiveness as a through route. This would be particularly detrimental to Porirua.

The current 20-year plan for projects and funding includes borrowing to allow construction of Transmission Gully to be brought forward into the first 10 year period. However, this still leaves a residual funding gap that has not been addressed in the Subcommittee report.

A number of ways to close this funding gap are being discussed including additional borrowing, tolls, a regional fuel tax, and the use of private-public partnerships. In addition, a report has recently been released on congestion charging for Auckland, and it is possible that changes to legislation in this area for Auckland could provide an additional tool for Wellington.

When these options are more fully developed it is expected they will be consulted on, and that Council will be involved in that process.

5.1.4 Crowding out of other projects

A key issue is the possibility of Transmission Gully crowding out other roading projects in the region. The recommendations reflect a view that the transport needs of all communities in Wellington should have equal weight. For example, the many thousands of commuters from the eastern, western and southern suburbs of Wellington City also deserve a modern and efficient transport network. It is in the interests of the whole region that these high-use areas of the network also function effectively.

Along the Western Corridor there have already been trade-offs proposed in the draft plan such as deferral of the Northern Expressway project. There are a number of projects that will be examined in more detail as part of the Ngauranga to Airport Strategic Study⁵. The recommendations also note the need to maintain this level of investment funding, and commitment to the Grenada to Hutt Valley link, because of the critical importance of these projects to the region and to communities in Wellington City. If Transmission Gully is built, it should be as well as other regional roading priority projects, not instead of. Transmission Gully will make the Ngauranga to Airport projects even more critical because of the increased volume and throughput of traffic into Wellington City.

5.1.5 Passenger transport investment

This report mostly deals with roading investments because they are the focus of consideration for the Western Corridor Plan. But the plan also contains a significant

⁵ These include proposals for travel demand management, a Waterloo Quay rail overbridge; Terrace Tunnel tidal flow; Ngauranga-Aotea capacity improvement; Basin Reserve upgrade; Basin Reserve to Airport improvements; walking and cycling projects; and public transport improvements.

amount of public transport investment which has been generally supported by Council in the past.

A key finding of the Hearings Subcommittee report is that this mix of investment is appropriate, and that a higher level public transport investment will not solve congestion issues or provide a significant enhanced level of access for commuters. This is based on extensive technical analysis of travel patterns and likely mode share shifts.

It is recommended that Council supports this conclusion of the Hearings Subcommittee.

5.2 Council's existing position in relation to the Report

In its submissions on both the Stage 2 and Stage 3 consultations on the Western Corridor Transport Study (WCTS), Council has supported a WCP based around the upgrade of the Coastal Route.

Council's position has been to support the original draft WCP on the basis that it is used as a long-term blueprint for the upgrade of the corridor. This option is referred to as the "incremental Coastal Route". Council agreed to the Hearings Subcommittee process and our transport spokesperson, Mayor Prendergast, has appeared before the Hearings Subcommittee on two occasions to present the Council's position.

It is clear the Subcommittee has not accepted Council's arguments. The Subcommittee has pointed out that the overwhelming majority of submissions favour a WCP incorporating Transmission Gully. This has been backed up by the results of a regional survey which shows that 65% of Wellington City residents and 65% of the region prefer Transmission Gully to the Coastal Route, with only 12% of Wellingtonians preferring the Coastal Route and 13% in the region, and 22% of Wellingtonians with no preference and 21% in the region.

When asked what they would be prepared to pay for Transmission Gully, 58% of Wellingtonians and 55% of regional residents said they would be prepared to pay at least \$100 per annum. The figures nominated by the survey were \$50, \$100, \$200 and \$500 and at \$500 there were still 17% of Wellingtonians and those in the region prepared to pay.

The decision now facing Council is whether to accept the findings of the Subcommittee report, particularly its central conclusion that Transmission Gully be preferred, or to maintain its support for incremental improvement of the Coastal Route.

The process for finalising a Western Corridor Plan has now reached a critical juncture. As noted in Section 4.2 it is expected that the WCP will be formally adopted on 27 April. This effectively makes it part of the Regional Land Transport Strategy and the region's official position on which transport investment decisions should be made.

It is appropriate that Council review its position because of:

- our agreement to the Hearings Subcommittee process to consider the WCP
- the WCP's critical importance to the future growth and form of the region

- the need for the region to move forward together with a common vision for that growth and the investment that supports it
- new and revised information now available to Council especially:
 - the Subcommittee report itself and the analysis it provides
 - the Treasury report on packages and costings
 - the Transit report on consenting the Coastal Route
 - a further public opinion survey that shows majority support across the region for Transmission Gully.

5.3 Options for Council’s position

1. Maintain current position of not supporting Transmission Gully and supporting incremental improvement of the Coastal Route

Note that the Council’s current position includes:

“having comprehensive, quality information on which to base such important strategic decisions, and establishing a clear and common understanding of the costs of options and the tradeoffs being made”.

The first issue has largely been addressed and the second is inherent in the position options, since they highlight the need to understand other impacts if Transmission Gully goes ahead.

Pros and cons of Council holding this position:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lowest risk due to incremental development along existing route • incremental approach meets existing funding criteria • has less impact from possible transport cost increases such as future oil prices • is more consistent with appropriate response to climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not reflect outcome of process Council signed up to • runs counter to clearly expressed public opinion • may not affect final decisions given likely RLTC voting patterns • risks loss of a significant portion of the additional transport funding from government • final projects in a coastal package may not be achievable; does not resolve uncertainty around this route

2. Accept the central conclusion of the report that Transmission Gully should proceed, subject to certain conditions

Summary of position:

- a) acknowledge the long-term view needed for major projects

- b) having agreed to the process of the Hearings Subcommittee and given the overwhelming public support for Transmission Gully, accept the central conclusion of the report that this proceed, subject to:
 - no significant impact on other projects beyond that already signalled
 - no compromise of projects along the Ngauranga to Airport corridor
 - no compromise of proposed Grenada to Hutt Valley link
 - land use controls and other measures put in place to manage land use impacts in Porirua and Kapiti
- c) Support development of a case for special funding criteria as identified in the Hearings Subcommittee’s report.

Pros and cons of Council holding this position:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflects outcome of process Council signed up for • reflects clearly expressed public opinion • shows a willingness to work together as a regional community • allows greater influence including with central government going forward • has potential to secure funding in addition to funding available under current criteria • has increased probability of regional support for critical Wellington projects • protection of other priority projects • measures put in place to manage land use impacts • uses existing long-term designations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high risk due to single large project • requires review of funding criteria for Transmission Gully • the full proposal may not be acceptable to Government and other projects might be compromised • supports investment that doesn't deliver adequate economic benefits based on current criteria • impact of possible oil price increases and climate change

3. Accept the central conclusion of the report that Transmission Gully should proceed, without conditions

Summary of position:

- a) acknowledge the long-term view needed for major projects
- b) having agreed to the process of the Hearings Subcommittee and given the overwhelming public support for Transmission Gully, accept the central conclusion of the report that this proceed.

Pros and cons of Council holding this position:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflects outcome of process Council signed up for• reflects clearly expressed public opinion• shows a willingness to work together as a regional community• uses existing long-term designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• high risk due to single large project• requires review of funding criteria for Transmission Gully• may compromise other projects eg: Ngauranga-Airport• less influence on further steps, more removed from further process• supports investment that doesn't deliver adequate economic benefits based on current criteria• could undermine regional form and structure• impact of possible oil price increases and climate change• Transmission Gully may not be built

The second option is recommended and this forms the basis of this report's recommendations.

6. Conclusion

This report deals with Council's position on a complex and difficult planning issue for the region: which of two strategic choices to make for transport investment on the Western Corridor.

It recommends that due to our agreement to the process and in the face of Wellingtonians' overwhelming support for Transmission Gully, Council's position should be changed to accept a WCP that includes Transmission Gully, subject to specific conditions.

The people of Wellington deserve the same treatment as others in the region, so in accepting the findings of the Hearings Subcommittee, Council should be adamant that Wellington city roading projects cannot be compromised as a result. The thousands of people who come into the city from Miramar, Karori and other Wellington suburbs each day deserve as good a roading system as the people who come into the city via the Western Corridor. That is in the interests of both the city and the region.

Council should also seek concrete assurances from Kapiti and Porirua Councils that land use controls and other measures will be put in place along the Transmission Gully route to minimise urban sprawl issues.

Council should note that Transmission Gully has been included by the Hearings Subcommittee as a special project in the 20-year roading programme, despite the fact that it performs poorly against current funding criteria. Council should support Transit and Land Transport New Zealand working with government agencies to develop a case for special funding criteria for Transmission Gully and other comparable projects.

Contact Officers: *Garry Poole, Chief Executive and Paul Desborough, Principal Advisor Economic Development.*

Supporting Information
<p>1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome <i>The Council's draft Transport Strategy supports an enhanced State Highway to the North and supports building the Grenada to Hutt Valley link provided that appropriate (Crown / LTNZ) funding is secured and that the environmental and social impacts are acceptable.</i></p> <p><i>Council has a strategic priority in the transport area to advocate for and facilitate investment in the city's State Highway network</i></p>
<p>2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact <i>The Western Corridor Plan contains a project to provide east-west links which may be assessed as having some local benefit and therefore require local share to fund. If the project is regarded as a State Highway this will not be the case. Until this is determined this capital expenditure will not be included in Council's long-term financial plans.</i></p>
<p>3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations <i>Although the Western Corridor project is almost entirely within the area of other councils, Wellington City Council also has a strategic relationship with Ngati Toa who are strongly opposed to the coastal route. The issues around this opposition are discussed in the Subcommittee report and the consenting strategy specifically.</i></p>
<p>4) Decision-Making <i>This is not a significant decision in terms of the Local Government Act 2002.</i></p>
<p>5) Consultation</p> <p>a) General Consultation <i>A public opinion survey is included in this report. As the Council is not responsible for the Western Corridor Plan it has not consulted directly. However there has been extensive consultation on the Plan and public opinion is a factor in the analysis of this issue.</i></p> <p>b) Consultation with Maori <i>See above. No consultation specifically on this issue.</i></p>
<p>6) Legal Implications <i>Not applicable</i></p>
<p>7) Consistency with existing policy <i>The report discusses a potential change to a policy position.</i></p>