
REPORT 3
(1215/52/IM)

SUBMISSION ON DRAFT HUTT CORRIDOR PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval of a submission on the draft Hutt Corridor Plan.

2. Executive Summary

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) is seeking submissions on a draft Hutt Corridor Plan that has been developed with input from officers from across the region. Submissions close on 15 June 2011.

The Hutt transport corridor follows State Highway 2 (SH2) and the railway line from Ngauranga to Upper Hutt, and includes east-west connections between SH1 and SH2, including SH58.

A draft submission has been developed (attached) which:

- supports the objectives proposed for the corridor plan, including the need to provide for future growth in accordance with the Wellington Regional Strategy;
- supports the package of works that includes a new link road between SH2 at Petone and SH1 at Grenada, demand management measures such as ramp signalling at Ngauranga and Petone, and the 'Beach to Bush' walking and cycling connection at Petone interchange;
- supports the upgrade of the off-road cycleway / walkway between Ngauranga and Petone.

Both the Petone – Grenada link road and the need for improvements to the cycleway have previously been supported by the Council. The Petone – Grenada link road is included in the existing Hutt Corridor Plan, and is consistent with the Northern area growth framework and the Lincolnshire Farm Structure Plan. The main benefits of the road are that it will assist in:

- addressing severe congestion on SH2 south of Petone (by removing unnecessary trips using Ngauranga interchange);

- facilitating economic growth through providing new direct links to industrial areas at Seaview, Porirua, and Lincolnshire Farm;
- increasing route security by providing an alternate route if an incident occurs on SH2 between Ngauranga and Petone; and
- providing a potential route for east–west public transport.

Improving the Petone – Ngauranga cycleway, including creating a new off-road facility between Horokiwi and Petone, will assist in increasing the mode share for pedestrians and cyclists. It is consistent with the objective in the Council’s cycling strategy to improve the experience of cycle trips to and from the central area by providing an option for cyclists to ride free of general traffic, and with the vision of the Great Harbour Way / Te Aranui o Pōneke.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree to the draft submission (attached as Appendix 1) on the draft Hutt Corridor Plan with the following key points:*
 - a. *support for the objectives proposed for the corridor plan, and in particular the need to provide for future growth in accordance with the Wellington Regional Strategy;*
 - b. *support for the Petone package of works that includes the Petone-Grenada link road;*
 - c. *support for the upgrade of the off-road cycleway / walkway between Ngauranga and Petone.*
3. *Agree to delegate to the Chief Executive and the Portfolio Leader Transport: Public Transport and Roads the authority to make changes to the submission required as a result of decisions of this Committee, as well as minor editorial amendments, prior to the submission being sent to Greater Wellington Regional Council.*

4. Background

GWRC is seeking submissions on a draft Hutt Corridor Plan that will replace the existing corridor plan that was adopted in December 2003. The draft corridor plan was developed with input from officers from across the region, and was adopted by the Regional Transport Committee on 29 March 2011. Submissions close on 15 June 2011.

The Hutt transport corridor follows SH2 and the railway line from Ngauranga to Upper Hutt, and includes east-west connections between SH1 and SH2, including SH58. The corridor includes some of the most congested parts of the Wellington road network, including the section between Ngauranga and Petone and the Ngauranga interchange.

Corridor plans are implementation mechanisms for the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS). They provide a mechanism to assess the impact of interventions in each corridor, including assessing how proposed interventions interact with each other and with the existing regional and local network in more detail than is required in the RLTS.

Corridor plans are used to inform other processes, including the regional request for funding from the National Land Transport Fund. However, inclusion of a project in the corridor plan does not necessarily mean that the project will be funded. The funding decision will be made by the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) and/or the relevant lead agency through separate funding processes.

Corridor plans do not address the detailed design of projects. These remain the responsibility of the relevant implementing agencies that carry out their own investigation, design, consent, and consultation processes, as appropriate, for each project.

The draft submission focuses on projects that occur largely within or affect the Wellington City area, as this is the area where the Council has detailed technical information and information on community preferences.

5. Discussion

The previous corridor plan, adopted in 2003, contained a vision, a summary of needs, and identified travel demand management, passenger transport, roading, and walking and cycling projects to occur in the short, medium, or long term. In contrast, the current draft corridor plan provides an extended discussion of issues within the corridor and the measures intended to address them, as well as the list of proposed projects. The corridor plan has also been updated to reflect projects that have been completed and the findings of investigations undertaken since 2003, of which the most significant is the Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study (published by NZTA in 2010).

It is recommended that the Council submission addresses the following parts of the corridor plan.

5.1 Objectives

The objectives proposed for the Hutt corridor plan are:

- provide for future growth (population, employment, freight) in the Hutt Corridor in accordance with Wellington Regional Strategy and Regional Policy Statement
- reduce severe congestion on the road network
- improve the mode share of walking, cycling, and public transport
- improve the accessibility for all modes and between modes
- improve route security and network resilience
- improve road safety throughout the corridor.

The last 5 objectives are consistent with the RLTS strategy outcomes, and are consistent with the multi-modal approach adopted by the Council. The first objective recognises the importance of the Wellington Regional Strategy as the only regionally agreed strategy for the future growth and urban form of the area. It has been used as the basis for the location of projected population, employment and freight growth to inform the traffic modelling as part of the analysis of the proposed projects.

It is recommended that the Council supports these objectives.

5.2 Petone package

The 'Petone package' consists of:

- a new link road between SH2 at Petone and SH1 at Grenada
- demand management measures such as ramp signalling at Ngauranga and Petone
- 'Beach to Bush' walking and cycling connection at Petone interchange.

The package has an indicative cost of \$260 million (including \$6 million for a scheme assessment) and is expected to be implemented by NZTA with construction occurring from 2013 – 2018. This package requires over 55% of the proposed expenditure identified in the corridor plan over the next 10 years, although not all projects have an indicative implementation cost.

The link road is included in the existing corridor plan, with an indicative cost of \$180 million and a target date of 2014/15 for the road to be open. The Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study has the following information on the link road:

- it would be a four-lane divided road with adequate shoulder width for cyclists, with a nominal operating speed of 70 kph
- the indicative benefit cost ratio (BCR) is 1.3
- the road requires the reconstruction on the Petone interchange (which is included in the cost estimate)
- the replacement of the Petone interchange will have safety benefits, and will also enable the piers of the existing overbridge to be used to construct the 'beach to bush' walking and cycling connection
- the link road would address (within the Hutt corridor):
 - growing congestion on SH2 between Petone and Ngauranga and in particular at Petone and Ngauranga on-ramps
 - poor east-west connectivity between the SH1 and SH2 corridors
- the link road would be approximately 6 km, compared to an equivalent journey of approximately 12.5 km using SH1 and 2, and, using traffic volumes at forecast 2016 levels, it is expected to carry approximately 25,000 vehicles per day including 2,500 heavy vehicles
- the project would support development at:
 - Lincolnshire Farm
 - Johnsonville Town Centre

- Petone
- the Seaview – Gracefield industrial area.

The Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study also investigated improving east-west links by upgrading SH58, however, while increased capacity on SH58 would reduce congestion on the route itself, it would have no impact on congestion at the southern end of the corridor where it is most severe.

The link road is consistent with the Northern area growth framework, and the Lincolnshire Farm Structure Plan, as well as the Council transport strategy. It is recommended that the Council submits in support of the Petone package on the basis that the proposed link road between SH2 at Petone and SH1 at Grenada will assist in:

- addressing severe congestion on SH2 south of Petone (by removing unnecessary trips using Ngauranga interchange)
- facilitating economic growth through providing new direct links to industrial areas at Seaview, Porirua, and Lincolnshire Farm
- increasing route security by providing an alternate route if an incident occurs on SH2 between Ngauranga and Petone; route security is likely to be increasingly important in this corridor, given its vulnerability to weather events
- providing a potential route for east–west public transport.

The Petone package also provides for cycling and walking facilities, and takes advantage of the opportunity to provide a ‘beach to bush’ connection for cyclists and walkers between the Petone foreshore and Korokoro Valley and the Belmont Regional Park. This multi-modal approach is consistent with the RLTS and the approach taken in the Council’s walking and cycling policies.

Until NZTA’s preferred alignment for the link road is identified, landowners and developers are being affected by the uncertainty. It is therefore important that the next phase of investigations, including the assessment of environmental and social impacts, is undertaken as soon as possible. It is recommended that the Council supports the timeline outlined in the Corridor Plan, with investigation in 2012.

5.3 Ngauranga to Petone Cycleway

The walking and cycling improvement package proposed in the corridor plan includes a project to upgrade the off-road cycleway / walkway between Ngauranga and Petone. The corridor plan outlines an option which is to improve the existing off road cycleway between Ngauranga to Horokiwi, have a connection across the railway lines, and a new off-road facility on the seaward side of the rail between Horokiwi and Petone. The project has an indicative cost of \$14 million, and has construction commencing in 2013/14.

The pedestrian / cycle facility was also studied in the Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study, which identifies the project as an option to improve the

inadequate level of service that currently exists. The details of the project as outlined in this study are:

- a bridge would be constructed over the rail tracks at Horokiwi to join the existing pedestrian / cycleway facility adjacent to SH2 (a bridge was chosen for safety reasons)
- a 3.6 meter wide shared use cycle / pedestrian track would be constructed on a reclamation of approximately 400 meters
- the indicative BCR is 1.3; however this is likely to understate the benefits as the standard methodology used is likely to significantly underestimate future demand
- the existing cycleway would be widened where feasible, and drainage issues that lead to ponding and flooding would be addressed.

It is recommended that the Council supports this project, which will improve safety and assist in increasing the mode share for pedestrians and cyclists. It is consistent with the objective in the Council's cycling strategy to improve the experience of cycle trips to and from the central area by providing an option for cyclists to ride free of general traffic, and the vision of the Great Harbour Way / Te Aranui o Pōneke.

Although the corridor plan does not discuss the detailed design of projects, it is recommended that Council's submission signals an interest in being involved in future stages. In particular, it would be useful to discuss with NZTA and KiwiRail the range of design options to be investigated, which could include consideration of the potential for the cycleway to cross the railway line at grade, using automated level crossing barriers, rather than by constructing a bridge which is likely to be both expensive and a disincentive to potential users.

The Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study confirmed that confident commuter cyclists are expected to continue to use the hard shoulder (particularly given the difficulty of widening some sections of the existing cycleway / walkway). It is important that planning for the corridor continues to provide for this user group, and the Corridor Plan should reflect this.

5.4 Other issues

The draft submission also recommends that Council supports:

- the programme of rail carriage refurbishment and station upgrades, and other improvements designed to increase the frequency, speed and reliability of rail services;
- investigation of potential responses to the effects of climate change on key transport infrastructure within the Hutt Corridor;
- investigation of the feasibility of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to optimise the road capacity on SH2 between Ngauranga and Petone.

5.5 Consultation and Engagement

GW is seeking public submissions on the corridor plan, and has invited feedback through a number of mechanisms, including a mail out to key stakeholders including community groups involved in the Ngauranga Triangle Study. The draft Council submission has been informed by community views expressed through previous consultation processes.

5.6 Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications of the proposed submission on the Corridor Plan. Funding decisions by agencies are taken separately.

5.7 Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

The Corridor Plan objectives take climate change into account, including objectives to improve the mode share of walking, cycling, and public transport, reduce severe congestion, and improve route security. An investigation is proposed into potential responses to the effects of climate change on key transport infrastructure within the corridor.

5.8 Long-Term Council Community Plan Considerations

The 2009-19 Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) provides for funding of \$59 million in 2018/19 for the Petone – Grenada link road. The timing and budget for this project were indicative, and the provision was made in the absence of any agreement about whether the road would be a local road or state highway. However, the link road would be a connection between regionally significant employment and population centres and therefore fits the criteria for a state highway, and it is anticipated that Council funding will only be needed for local roading connections. The requirement for funding will need to be reviewed as part of the development of the 2012-22 Long Term Plan.

6. Conclusion

The draft corridor plan is consistent with regional policies including the RLTS, and the Wellington Regional Strategy, and with existing Council policies. It is recommended that the Council submits in support of the corridor plan, and in particular in support of the Petone package and the improvements to the Ngauranga to Petone cycleway.

Attached:

Appendix 1: Draft Wellington City Council submission: Draft Hutt Corridor Plan

Appendix 2: Draft Hutt Corridor Plan April 2011

Contact Officer: *Tass Larsen, Principal Advisor transport strategy*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The submission recommended by this report supports the Council's strategic outcomes.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

There are no LTCCP impacts of this report.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

No Treaty of Waitangi issues have been identified in this report. There may be issues that relate to specific projects discussed in the Hutt Corridor Plan, in which case they should be addressed by the responsible agency at the appropriate time.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision. The decision making body for the Hutt Corridor Plan is the Regional Transport Committee and GWRCI.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

GWRC is undertaking consultation on the draft corridor plan. The development of the draft submission takes into account community views expressed in previous consultation exercises, including consultation on the Ngauranga Triangle Study.

b) Consultation with Maori

GWRC is undertaking consultation on the draft corridor plan, including with Maori. The development of the draft submission takes into account community views expressed in previous consultation exercises, including consultation on the Ngauranga Triangle Study.

6) Legal Implications

No legal issues are identified in this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report recommends a submission on the draft Hutt Corridor that is consistent with existing WCC policy, in particular the cycling and walking policies, and the transport and urban design strategies and Northern Area Framework.