

Submission from Wellington City Council – Draft Hutt Corridor Plan

Submission to: **Regional Transport Committee**

Discussion paper: **Draft Hutt Corridor**

From: **Wellington City Council**

Date: **15 June 2011**

1. Introduction

The Hutt Corridor Plan is an important mechanism for identifying the specific projects and activities required to give effect to the 2010 Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS). Wellington City Council supports the review of the corridor plan to take into account the studies and strategies developed since the existing corridor plan was adopted in 2003, particularly the Wellington Regional Strategy and Ngauranga Triangle Strategic Study.

The Council's submission focuses on projects that are 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.

The Council would like to be heard in support of this submission.

2. General Comments

The Council supports the objectives proposed for the corridor plan, and in particular the need to provide for future growth in accordance with the Wellington Regional Strategy. It is important that the projects prioritised in the corridor plan support the achievement of the RLTS, in particular the strategic outcomes:

- increased peak period passenger transport mode share
- increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists
- reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- reduced severe road congestion
- improved regional road safety
- improved land use and transport integration
- improved regional freight efficiency.

3. Petone Package

The Council supports the priority accorded to the "Petone" Package in the corridor plan 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, and
- providing a potential route for east–west public transport.

As a result, the link road will address a number of the RLTS strategic outcomes, in particular by reducing severe road congestion and improving regional freight efficiency.

It is important that the package provides appropriate cycling and walking facilities, consistent with the multi-modal approach supported in the RLTS, and takes advantage of the opportunity provided by the changes necessary to the Petone interchange for the new link road to provide a 'beach to bush' connection for cyclists and walkers between the Petone foreshore and Korokoro Valley and the Belmont Regional Park.

Until the preferred alignment of the link road is clear, the development that is already occurring in the areas is being affected by the lack of certainty. It is therefore important that the next phase of investigations is undertaken as soon as possible, and the Council supports the timeline outlined in the Corridor Plan.

4. Walking and Cycling

The Council strongly supports the walking and cycling improvement package, in particular the upgrade of the off-road cycleway / walkway between Ngauranga and Petone, which should be proceed as soon as possible. This will assist in improving safety and increasing the mode share for pedestrians and cyclists. The current situation where the cycleway and walkway is incomplete makes the entire route unsuitable for walkers and for recreational and inexperienced cyclists. The benefits of providing a cycleway between Horokiwi and Petone will be out of proportion to the distance involved.

The project 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.

As the project moves to the investigation and design phases, Council would welcome consideration of:

- Whether it is possible to commence the improvements to the existing section of the cycleway prior to the construction of the new section, given the potential to significantly improve the surface and address ponding and flooding issues relatively simply and inexpensively.
- A range of design options, including 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.

Technical studies confirm 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. Other issues

5.1 Public transport

Given the difficulty of increasing roading capacity in the Hutt Corridor between Ngauranga to Petone, it is important that public transport services operate at maximum efficiency – particularly rail services, which have a dedicated uncongested corridor. The Council therefore supports

the programme of rail carriage refurbishment and station upgrades, and other improvements designed to increase the frequency, speed and reliability of services.

5.2 Studies and Investigations

The Council supports as priorities:

- 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. Although previous investigations have not supported HOV or high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, these options should remain under consideration for possible implementation as other changes to road layouts are considered.

5.3 Long Term Vision

The Corridor Plan quotes the long term vision for the corridor from the 2007-2016 RLTS (corridor plan page 8). The corridor plan should be amended so that the vision for the corridor forms part of the corridor plan, rather than being quoted from a strategy document that has been superseded by the 2010-40 RLTS.