

## 2 Policy Context

All policies made by local or regional councils must align with and support those made at the national level. Strategies for developing transport infrastructure are required to conform to the requirements of the New Zealand Transport Strategy 2002 (NZTS). The NZTS is the Government's ten year plan for improving transport. It is currently being updated and publication of the revised version is expected in late 2008. The Government has indicated that the themes and direction of the national strategy, as previously published, will remain unchanged. The revised strategy is likely to contain objectives and targets, which lower tier interventions will contribute towards. The legislative tools for achieving the outcomes defined in the NZTS are the Land Transport Act 1998 (LTA) and the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA). This chapter presents the desired outcomes of the NZTS and explains how the supporting legislation helps to achieve them.

### 2.1 National Strategy and Legislation

#### 2.1.1 New Zealand Land Transport Strategy 2002

The NZTS is a national policy for developing and using transport infrastructure. The strategy seeks to better integrate the planning, management and operation of transport in New Zealand. One of the key changes from previous policy is that more weight is afforded to the assessment of the wider, long-term impacts of transport on communities and the environment. The Government's vision for transport, as defined in the NZTS, is that:

*"by 2010 New Zealand will have an affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable transport system."*

The NZTS provides a number of national objectives that transport infrastructure and services need to contribute towards in order to the Government's vision for New Zealand is to be realised. These objectives are to:

- Assist economic development;
- Assist safety and personal security;
- Improve access and mobility;
- Protect and promote public health; and
- Ensure environmental sustainability.

The Government is currently seeking feedback on ideas to update the NZTS to improve its alignment with "The New Zealand Energy Strategy" and "The New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy". The update is also being drafted to reflect the Government's commitment to the creation of an Emissions Trading Scheme. The updated strategy will be published in 2008. The update will:

- Provide direction for the transport sector until 2040;
- Include targets that can be used to measure progress towards achieving the strategy objectives; and
- Provide clearer guidance for determining funding allocations.

In advance of the updated strategy's publication, the Government has released a discussion document which includes draft targets for New Zealand. These targets may be revised as a result of feedback received during consultation. The draft targets that are relevant to this study are to:

- Reduce kilometres travelled by single occupancy vehicles in major urban areas on weekdays by ten per cent per capita by 2015 compared to 2007;
- Reduce road deaths to no more than 200 per annum;
- Increase the public transport mode share of journeys to work in Wellington to 20%;
- Increase the public transport mode share for all journeys to 7%;
- Increase the active travel mode share to 30%;
- Reduce the population that become seriously ill or die prematurely as a result of air pollution caused by motor vehicles;
- Minimise any public health effects associated with transport related noise; and
- Ensure no net loss of indigenous vegetation or fauna as a result of infrastructure construction or maintenance.

Potential improvement options should be developed in a way that helps contribute towards achieving these targets.

### **2.1.2 Land Transport Management Act 2003 and the Land Transport Act 1998**

The LTMA builds upon legislation contained within LTA which was predominantly focused upon the development of transport infrastructure rather than its use and management. The LTMA requires the preparation of land transport strategies for each of the New Zealand Regions. It specifies that they are developed with high levels of public input. It also compels locally elected bodies and organisations such as Transit NZ, Land Transport NZ and On-Track to work in accordance with the adopted regional strategy.

The LTMA aims to support the objectives of the NZTS by making specific requirements of Council's involved in the preparation of the Regional Land Transport Strategies. The legislation incorporates the principles of the NZTS:

- Sustainability;
- Integration;
- Responsiveness; and
- Safety.

The act also specifies that potential transport interventions are assessed:

- in relation to other development proposals within the region, rather than in isolation;
- to demonstrate the degree to which they contribute towards achieving community outcomes (defined in the Regional Land Transport Strategy);

- to demonstrate the degree to which they will contribute to managing the demand for travel; and
- to determine affordability given the likely availability of funding for the region.

One of the primary mechanisms used to assess regional transport interventions are corridor strategies. The Western Corridor Strategy, completed in 2004, recommended upgrading SH1 to four lanes through Waikanae and Paraparaumu. In accepting this recommendation, the Regional Land Transport Committee (RLTC) will have considered the proposal in the context of other competing and complementary options as well as assessing it in relation to outcomes for the regional population. This study must therefore make account of the original assessment and ensure that details for the SH1 improvement strategy complement, rather than detract from the conclusions of the 2004 study.

## 2.2 Transit NZ Policy

The Transit NZ Planning Policy Manual was published in 2007. It sets out Transit NZ policy, standards and guidelines on Transport Planning, Land-use planning and the integration of the two. Within the document Transit NZ state their commitment to sustainable development and in its Integrated Planning Policy (IPP) defines its objectives for the state highway network. It states that:

*Transit NZ seeks planning outcomes that ensure state highways:*

- (i) Provide safe, efficient and pleasant links between cities, towns, airports, ports, transport hubs and places of interest.*
- (ii) Balance the needs of national productivity and through traffic with the needs and aspirations of surrounding communities and local economies.*
- (iii) Support well planned local transport networks that in turn service sustainable land use patterns.*
- (iv) Support the provision of travel choices and accessibility while encouraging low impact travel behaviours.*
- (v) Are a legacy we can be proud of.*

As well as documenting the IPP, the manual defines supporting policies explaining how the organisation will support walking and cycling, provision for passenger transport services and development control.

## 2.3 Regional Strategy and Policy

### 2.3.1 Regional Policy Statement

The current Regional Policy Statement (RPS) was published in 1995. The Regional Council intends to publish an updated RPS in early 2008. The 1995 RPS describes the Region's urban areas as being characterised by low densities and developed across

extended areas. It notes that this is likely to be the reason for the population's high degree of dependence on the private motor car.

Key themes (objectives and policies) include the promotion and application of energy efficiency and a moderation in energy demand through, for example, the design and operation of transportation systems. Consideration for the transportation demands resulting from land development (i.e. integrated land-use and transport planning) is also emphasised in the statement.

Objective 1 (Built Environment and Transportation) as defined by the regional policy statement is of particular relevance to this study. The objective for the region is that "*Urban areas, the built environment and transportation systems are developed so that they, and their associated activities, use resources efficiently and the demand for the use of finite resources is moderated*".

Policies made in support of this objective are generally consistent with those at national level. The most directly relevant are Policies 3 and 4 which relate to the development of transport systems and the protection of regionally important transport corridors respectively.

Policy 3 supports the use of transport systems that reduce the demand for energy and / or rely on renewable energy sources. It also promotes transport systems that avoid or minimise environmental effects directly resulting from the development and operation of transport systems. Two elements of this policy are relevant to the direction of this study: *that transport systems should be developed to:*

- *meet community needs for accessibility; and*
- *discourage dispersed development.*

In the context of State Highway development, these policy themes are contradictory. One way to maintain accessibility would be to provide regular intersections and access directly from State Highway. In the longer term this approach is likely to result in more dispersed ribbon development as well as reducing the efficiency of the State Highway. A strategy for SH1 must aim to maintain or enhance access to community facilities without increasing the number of intersections on SH1.

The Regional Council's primary method for implementing these policies is using the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

### **2.3.2 Regional Land Transport Strategy (2007-2016)**

The Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) was adopted in July 2007 and translates the objectives, themes and policies contained within the regional policy statement and the Wellington Regional Strategy into specific action programmes and other strategic interventions. The vision for the regional transport system is:

*“To deliver, through significant achievements in each period<sup>1</sup>, an integrated land transport system that supports the regions people and prosperity in a way that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable”*

The strategy highlights the national importance of the Western Corridor through which both the NIMT Railway and SH1 pass. It highlights that as well as providing access from the north island to the economic generators of Wellington CBD and CentrePort, the corridor also connects communities in the north island with the south island and overseas.

In presenting a vision for the region, the strategy recognises that increasing population and economic growth within the region is likely to lead to increased demand for travel. The strategy indicates that the region’s population are making more trips, more often and over longer distances.

### **Strategy Direction**

In developing a direction for the strategy, the Regional Council considered three alternative approaches:

- Road infrastructure focused investment;
- Planned investment across different modes; and
- Passenger transport focused investment.

Public opinion in relation to each approach was canvassed through consultation. The outcomes expected as a result of each investment approach were also evaluated against the strategy objectives. The regional strategy objectives are similar to those presented in the NZTS with the addition of an objective to “ensure that the regional transport programme is affordable for the regional community”.

On the basis of this evaluation and with regard to public opinion, the RLTC decided to develop a strategy of planned investment (including road development), but to prioritise spending on passenger transport.

The RLTS defines a number of land transport outcome targets against which the success of the strategy will be measured. It also includes a commitment to upgrade SH1 through Kapiti. The outcomes should be used to guide the form of improvements to the highway and can be used to assess alternative options developed as part of this study.

The RLTS document also includes detailed policies to guide organisations involved in providing for transport activities. All are subject to constraints which include funding, legislative provisions, consent and planning processes that are outside the scope of the strategy. Most of the RLTS policies are implicit to the strategy objectives however some warrant mention here.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as Short Term (0-3 years), Medium Term (4-10 years), Long Term (10 years +)

## Network Management

Network management policies relevant to this study aim to ensure that best use is made of network management techniques (such as travel information, HOV priority, variable speed limits, ramp metering) to optimise the performance of the transport network. The strategy also encourages the separation of arterial and local road traffic where practicable.

## Land-use Planning

Policies relating to integration of land-use and transport planning aim to support densification of development around major passenger transport interchanges. This is closely related to travel demand management strategies which aim to reduce reliance on private motor vehicles for short trips. A policy encouraging the consideration of major recreational and tourist traffic flows during planning processes is also included.

## Funding and Affordability

The RLTS includes a policy to support the investigation of mechanisms for addressing funding gaps in the regional land transport programme. Potential mechanisms could include tolling, road pricing, PPP and developer contributions. This policy is particularly pertinent given work by the Regional Council's that forecasts a funding gap of \$300M.

## 2.4 Western Corridor Study 2006: Adopted Strategy & Outcomes

The Western Corridor Study was commissioned by Greater Wellington Regional Council in order to help them fulfil their obligations under the Land Transport Management Act. The multi-modal study investigated regional travel along the corridor between Otaki and the Ngauranga Merge. The study reported in 2006 and many of its recommendations have since been incorporated within the updated Regional Land Transport Strategy. Transport interventions which will be pursued as a result of the study include:

- Four-laning SH1 from north of Otaki to MacKays Crossing (i.e. this study);
- New road through Transmission Gully avoiding coastal route through Plimmerton and Pukuru Bay, this is currently being investigated by TNZ;
- Rail double tracking from MacKays Crossing to Waikanae and increased service frequency, this is presently being developed by OnTrack; and
- Rail electrification from Wellington City to Waikanae, being done presently by OnTrack.

The study also advocated establishing new railway stations within Kapiti Coast District at Lindale and Raumati and in the shorter term encouraging park and ride at existing railway stations. A study being led by GWRC to investigate the feasibility of providing these new railway stations is currently underway.

## 2.5 Local Strategy and Policies

Three strategies / policy documents prepared by KCDC are identified as of particular relevance to this study. The most important points from each are referenced below. The District Plan sets out the Council's key policies for the physical development of the district.

In the context of this study much of its contents are constraints that will be used to formulate improvement options that minimise the impact upon the cultural and environmental features of the district. These constraints are identified in chapter 3.

### 2.5.1 District Plan

KCDC were one of the first Local Authorities in NZ to develop an adopted District Plan under the RMA process. This District Plan was adopted in 1999. The KCDC District Plan currently includes designation for a number of key transport corridors, including the existing SH1, rail corridor and the proposed WLR.

KCDC are currently approaching a period in which they will undertake a review of their District Plan. Section 79 of the Resource Management Act requires that Council's commence a plan review within 10 years of the operative date. KCDC must therefore begin a review before the end of 2009. This presents a significant opportunity for Transit NZ and KCDC to signal their intentions to the local communities and to stakeholders in the wider region, both in terms of land use and transport facilities and provision.

Using the updated District Plan to designate land for road infrastructure will make subsequent processes to obtain consents more straightforward and less costly. The designation should cover new roads, alterations to the existing road where relevant and intersection configurations. Land designations are advantageous because they:

- (a) identify land for its planned purpose and protects it against interim activities (such as building new houses) that might hinder the eventual construction and operation of a road and associated infrastructure (bridges etc), or make it costly to bring into effect.
- (b) alert future purchasers of land (private developers and the public) to future plans for the District and enable them to plan accordingly.
- (c) provide a degree of certainty for the Council, because designation makes the road a permitted activity and exempts it from the rules in the District Plan. Resource consents cannot provide this degree of certainty.
- (d) take effect immediately after a Notice of Requirement is lodged. Resource consent or plan change processes can take a long time to secure, with no guaranteed date of conclusion or approval.

Designations are made under Section 168 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). KCDC, as a Requiring Authority under the Act, can designate an area of land. Transit NZ would need to use different procedures to safeguard land for transport infrastructure. It is noted however, that designations do not override the rules of any Regional Plan and any consent requirements under a Regional Plan would remain in force.

A notice of requirement for a new designation can be lodged at any time, either in advance, during or after construction. Any Notice of Requirement for a new designation would require full public notification under the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991. The RMA permits KCDC to accept a Notice of Requirement and to publicly notify it as part of the Plan Change process. Designation in this way will give KCDC the opportunity to make cost

savings. It will also enable the public to view proposals in the context of development of the District as a whole and in relation to other proposed developments.

### 2.5.2 Long Term Council Community Plan 2006 - Kapiti Coast District

As well as emphasising the lifestyle and culture of the Kapiti Coast community, the long term community plan provides strategic direction guiding the community towards sustainable living and sustainable development. Self reliance for the district is a theme that is repeated throughout the plan and many of the plan elements are designed to help the Council become self dependent. With regard to transport the Council strongly advocates passenger transport and active travel.

The Council recognises the importance of using land-use planning as a tool for achieving sustainable travel within the community. The plan states the Council's:

- “desire to build a District ‘heart’ .....[and] attractive urban centres”;
- “willingness to explore [more intensive land-use], but only in limited or targeted areas where changes in form can support public transport and town centres”; and
- “desire [for Kapiti Coast].....to become a place that has extensive local opportunities for work and business development.”

The Council understands that in order to achieve its transport and land-use planning objectives it is necessary that infrastructure is introduced at the appropriate time and in an appropriate sequence. The community plan also emphasises the importance of the community's (public and business) perceptions of the District and its infrastructure.

Key infrastructure projects to which the Council has indicated its support include the strategic cycleway, walkway and bridleway network and the Western Link Road.

The Western Link Road is a planned local road (designated in the District Plan) which will provide a low speed connection between Poplar Avenue in Raumati and Peka Peka (refer Figure 2.1). This road will provide a link into every road it crosses on route, plus a number of additional linkages with the local road network and proposed development sites. The WLR incorporates facilities for walking, cycling and equestrian users.



Figure 2.1 – Proposed Western Link Road



### 2.5.3 Walkways Cycleways and Bridleways Strategy

In addition to the Long Term Council Community Plan, KCDC have published a Walkways, Cycleways and Bridleways Strategy. The strategy development was informed through workshop with local stakeholders. Public feedback was also sought through public consultation.

This engagement identified that the community favoured a network of long distance, recreational tracks fed by local links with community services such as town centres, schools and other community facilities. The long distance walkways / cycleways, two of which follow the strategic north-south corridor between Otaki and Paekakariki, could also be used by committed commuter cyclists.

A key element of the Council's strategy is a middle height walkway along the coastal hills to the east of State Highway 1. The walkway, which would not adjoin SH1, would link Paekakariki, Waikanae and Otaki. The strategy also identifies issues that need to be addressed through a variety of means if levels of walking and cycling are to increase in the district. The issues that should be considered in developing proposals for improving SH1 using active forms of travel include the need to:

- improve access to town centres from residential areas;
- provide appropriate, continuous and convenient facilities (crossings, designated road space, shelter);
- give priority over motorists at certain locations; and
- improve journey ambience by improving feelings of safety and addressing traffic noise and motorised vehicle speeds;

## 2.6 Summary

National and local policy provides significant opportunity and support for Transit NZ and the other key stakeholders to develop and enhance transport facilities in a part of NZ which has seen significant growth and development with limited infrastructure development or active management of traffic demand.

The upcoming District Plan review provides an opportunity for the inclusion of new designations, improved land use control, and active management of transport demand through rules and requirements.