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Dear Sir/Madam

Greater Wellington's submission to: *Towards the First National Infrastructure Plan - Facts and Issues*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to this document which is a precursor to the first National Infrastructure Plan.

Greater Wellington's comments on the document are set out below. These are made according to the document's headings.

Strategic Direction¹

Immediate priorities

Greater Wellington notes the government's immediate and medium term priorities for infrastructure investment set out in points 12 to 40 of the document.

The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (July 2007) recognises the need to provide for the efficient and safe movement of people and goods throughout the region. In relation to development of Wellington's regional transport network, we are supportive of the following priorities:

Broadband

Access to communications technology can have an important role in reducing the demand for physical travel to access employment, goods and services. There are still many parts of the Wellington region that do not have access to fast broadband speeds, particularly the rural areas such as much of Wairarapa. Central government broadband investment is identified as an advocacy initiative in our Regional Travel Demand Management (TDM) Plan and is promoted through the Wellington Regional Strategy. The strategy recognises that there is a positive relationship between investment in broadband and GDP growth. Achieving region-wide broadband availability is a priority which will involve councils either facilitating private sector development, or owning and

¹ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 5

operating the infrastructure themselves². Two objectives have been set for the establishment of broadband in the Wellington region. Firstly, by 2017 all of the Wellington region will have affordable access to an interactive, open access, broadband network. Secondly, as an interim target by 2010, the region will adopt an interim target of 5Mbps for data transfer speeds – this target will be reviewed to better meet the needs of the region³.

Roads of national significance

The Wellington Road of National Significance (RoNS) is State Highway 1 between Levin and Wellington. The Wellington RoNS includes a number of projects that are a high priority for the region in our Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP) and we support these being progressed as an immediate priority.

The New Zealand Transport Agency's recent development of plans for improving State Highway One through the Kapiti Coast District Area is consistent with the objective of the region's strategy.

We understand that the National Land Transport Fund has been reprioritised to reflect forecast investment for highway development over the next 10 years⁴ and this will improve links between our major business centres and increase the efficiency of transport of goods and people.

Road funding and pricing

Point 45 recognises that building our way out of congestion is unlikely to be an affordable or efficient strategy. Greater Wellington agrees with this. An efficient level of use is most likely to be achieved when users pay for the full costs they generate. We encourage the proposal for a public debate on the long-term issues of affordability and efficiency facing the transport system.

Greater Wellington also notes that the current legislation does not allow for pricing of existing roads. The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) and Regional Travel Demand Management Plan include policies to advocate for legislative changes to enable road pricing of existing roads as an option. The RLTS also identifies road pricing of existing roads as one mechanism that could be investigated to address the current funding gap for land transport facing our region.

² Wellington Regional Strategy, page 22

³ Wellington Regional Strategy, page 23

⁴ Infrastructure: facts and issues, page 6

Policy Context⁵

Role of Markets and Government

Greater Wellington notes the five principles (listed under 1, 2a, 2b, 3, 4 and 5) that guide government decision-making in respect of the selection projects and the development of the regulatory environment. Principle 1⁶ sets out the role of government in the areas of transport, energy, telecommunications, urban water, rural water for irrigation and electricity generation, health, education and corrections.

Greater Wellington would like to draw your attention to the Proposed Regional Policy Statement 2009 which is a regional document that identifies a number of resource management issues within the region and sets out the regional approach to the integrated management of natural and physical resources for the Wellington region.

In relation to the region's energy and infrastructure, the regional document recognises that the region's infrastructure such as the transport network, the telecommunication facilities, the rail network, and other utilities, including energy transmission and distribution networks forms part of national or regional networks and enables communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing⁷. The regional document provides guidance to local government by directing that this be reflected in their district plans. This is fulfilling our role at a regional level in improving the regulatory framework which is consistent with Principle 1.

The regional document also highlights that the management, use, and operation of infrastructure can be adversely affected when incompatible land uses occur under, over, on, or alongside. This regional regulatory framework therefore requires that all land uses or activities are compatible with the efficient operation and maintenance of the infrastructure – this could be achieved by way of appropriate buffer corridors.

Sectoral Analysis⁸

Transport: Roads - Climate change

Point 97 identifies the issue of climate change as it relates to the transport sector. In particular, the greenhouse gas emissions that transport contributes and the likely impact of an Emissions Trading Scheme on the price of fuel. However, we consider that the likely impact of projected sea level rises, together with more frequent and intense storms, on low lying transport infrastructure (roads and rail) are also important climate change related issues that should be analysed and discussed. For example there is a need to identify those parts of the strategic network likely to be adversely affected and to formulate a plan for responses, such as emergency management plan, in relation to these areas. This should form part of the government's infrastructure plan.

⁵ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 11

⁶ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 12

⁷ Proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region, 2009, page 28

⁸ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 18

Drinking Water – Analysis

Point 185 refers to the water supply for Wellington and Lower Hutt cities. The report this information is taken from is dated 2004/2005 and is now out of date. Greater Wellington recommends that this be updated as follows:

‘The water supply for the Wellington Metropolitan area (Wellington, Hutt, Upper Hutt, and Porirua cities) is of very high quality but is fully committed. The risk of a shortfall occurring is now higher than that agreed between Greater Wellington (the bulk supplier) and the four cities. As a consequence, Greater Wellington is actively investigating a number of measures to augment existing sources as well as the development of new sources. Funding of \$52.5M (\$2008) is included in the Greater Wellington 2009-19 Long Term Council Community Plan for this development and spending of a further \$124.5M (\$2008) in the following five years is envisaged. The introduction of demand management measures would defer this investment by a few years at most.’

Planned Investment⁹

Transport: Roads

Greater Wellington notes the government commitment to advancing the seven roads of National Significance (RoNS) throughout New Zealand, including the Wellington Northern Corridor (Levin to Wellington) – SH1.

In relation to the ‘Other significant roading projects expected to be implemented 2009/12’ tabulated under point 301¹⁰, we note that the projects listed for the Wellington region do not accurately align with the recently released National Land Transport Programme (NLTP). For, example Muldoons Corner Easing and SH2/SH58 grade separation are not identified despite being identified in the NLTP as key projects for Wellington over the next three years. Greater Wellington recommends that this be included in ‘Other significant roading projects expected to be implemented 2009/12’.

Transport: Rail¹¹

The rail network is a vital part of Wellington’s transport system, and has a key role in supporting economic growth. Around 30% of journey to work trips to Wellington City Central Business District during the peak are by public transport - passenger rail makes up a significant part of these trips over the medium and longer distances. Removal of rail freight infrastructure constraints is an outcome sought in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy. Rail freight provides an alternative to road freight, particularly for moving heavy freight loads over longer distances through to Wellington’s CentrePort. This may become an increasingly important option in future with a projected significant increase in freight movements, particularly on those routes (such as State Highway 2 between Wairarapa and CentrePort) where the only direct road route provides a

⁹ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 77

¹⁰ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 78

¹¹ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 81

relatively poor level of service for heavy vehicles, with associated safety implications for general traffic.

Greater Wellington notes and agrees with the rail network issues identified in point 302¹² around the need to replace an ageing locomotive and wagon fleet, and the need to address more than a decade of under-investment in our railway track and signalling system – to ensure rail is a reliable and attractive option wherever possible.

The document accurately reflects identified committed projects for the Wellington metro rail network, set out in point 303 – double tracking, and electrification to Waikanae, Johnsonville line upgrade, and new electric passenger trains. We note that funding for the upgrade of the Paraparaumu and Waikanae railway stations has also been recently committed.

Point 304 highlights that both Wellington and Auckland regions have ‘significant aspirations for the ongoing development of their metro passenger rail systems, which will require expenditure of billions of dollars over the next 20 years’. We would like to add that the Wellington region has invested in the purchase of new trains and ongoing improvements to rail corridors and stations. Rail Scenario One of the Wellington Regional Rail Plan includes the next package of improvement projects that the region is seeking to implement at a total cost of around \$177M (\$2008).

Infrastructure and economic growth¹³

Greater Wellington notes the government’s medium and long-term strategy for achieving economic growth and the six policy drivers that will form the core of the government’s economic programme for the next three to five years. These policy drivers include investing in productive infrastructure; delivering better, smarter public services.

We consider that a safe and efficient state highway network; an efficient, reliable, and attractive public transport network; and good walking and cycling networks are key features of successful cities and are critical to supporting sustainable economic growth in the Wellington region.

Valuable productive time can be lost as a result of traffic congestion, and there is high economic cost to the community of road crashes and health issues such as obesity and diabetes. It is important to recognise the role transport infrastructure investment can have in shaping a transport network that responds to these issues and its consequent contribution to economic growth and community wellbeing.

¹² Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 81

¹³ Infrastructure: Facts and Issues, page 104

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward our views on the document. Please feel free to contact Ling Phang on telephone 382 7955 if you would like any further information on the matters raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely

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Acting Manager, Environmental Policy