

Report **05.436**

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Committee **Regional Land Transport**

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Western Corridor Plan Formal Consultation

1. Purpose

To approve a proposed Western Corridor Plan for the purposes of formal public consultation.

2. Significance of the decision

The subject matter of this report will lead to the Council making a “significant” decision within the meaning of the Local Government Act 2002. The process being used to reach this decision is the consultation requirements of the Land Transport Management Act 2003. The decision being made at today’s meeting will enable the third phase of consultation to commence.

After submissions and hearings of submissions, the Regional Land Transport Committee will recommend to Council a Western Corridor Plan for inclusion in the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

3. Background

The Western Corridor Transportation Study commenced in August 2004 as a partnership between Greater Wellington Regional Council and Transit New Zealand. The development of the proposed Western Corridor Plan has followed the consultation requirements of the Land Transport Management Act 2003.

The first period of consultation, on the corridor issues, concluded in November 2004. On 20 April 2005 a series of scenarios and supporting technical work was circulated for consultation period two which concluded on 21 May 2005. During that time a number of Open Days and a series of meetings with key stakeholders were held.

Since the end of May 2005, further technical work and briefings with stakeholders have been undertaken, which have led to the proposed Western Corridor Plan.

Committee members discussed the make up of the proposed Western Corridor Plan on 18 August 2005. A report which gives useful background relevant to the makeup of the proposed Western Corridor Plan is reproduced as **attachment 1**.

4. Comment

4.1 The Proposed Western Corridor Plan

The proposed Western Corridor Plan is outlined in **attachment 2**. This is a costed multimodal and integrated plan designed to meet regional transport objectives. The plan emphasises reliability rather than generous capacity. Reliability should be read to mean both road and rail reliability.

The Corridor Plan has been subject to sensitivity testing, such as different economic and demographic growth assumptions, as well as assumptions regarding the cost of oil. This testing shows that the Corridor Plan is robust under these changed assumptions and has the flexibility to remain valid should the underlying assumptions change.

The sensitivity analysis confirms that a four lane Coastal Highway has sufficient capacity to meet the demands of a 20 year high population growth scenario. This will be more than sufficient for the medium to long term future. However, it is prudent to retain the option of Transmission Gully to future proof regional road access and/or to provide an alternative if the consenting process denies the complete development of the Coastal Expressway.

As part of the supporting technical work a Parallel-Cost and Programme review was undertaken. This work confirms that there remains approximately a \$300 million cost difference between the Transmission Gully motorway and the Coastal Highway option.

The Parallel Review generally identifies higher costs for both options than the Project Team costs. This reflects the level of uncertainty that exists until projects are actually built.

It should be appreciated that the 95 percentile cost estimate for the Coastal Route. In the Parallel Review, represents a different concept from the Project Team Coastal Route and is unlikely to be seriously contemplated.

The Western Corridor Plan has been the subject of discussion with Government. On 5 July 2005 the Minister of Transport announced a funding package for the next 10 years for the Western Corridor Plan. This package included \$255 million between 2007/08 and 2015/16 towards additional investment in passenger transport and roading to address congestion, improve safety and to improve access reliability.

A further \$405 million was allocated, subject to reporting back to the Minister of Transport by mid December 2005 on progress on the Wellington Regional Strategy and the development by Transit New Zealand and appropriate local

authorities of an agreed detailed corridor implementation plan, including a strategy for obtaining consents for a long term coastal corridor option.

The Transit New Zealand Board considered the proposed Western Corridor Plan at its August 2005 meeting. A copy of the Board's resolution is provided in **attachment 3**.

4.2 Submissions and hearings

Submissions on the proposed Western Corridor Plan will close early November 2005 to provide time for local government meeting cycles. This means a hearing of submissions could be held in mid November 2005. Reporting to key stakeholders can take place early December 2005.

A terms of reference for a hearing subcommittee has been developed and is shown in **attachment 4**. It will be necessary for the Committee to ratify the proposed terms of reference and to appoint the members of the hearing subcommittee.

5. Communication

The proposed Western Corridor Plan, shown in **attachment 2**, will be the subject of formal public consultation. The consultants for this project are in the process of developing the consultation material which will contain the proposed Western Corridor Plan.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Approves the proposed Western Corridor Plan presented in **attachment 2** for formal public consultation carried out under the terms of the Land Transport Management Act.*
2. *Notes that the need for road capacity over and beyond the 20 year planning horizon is expected to be met by the proposed upgraded Coastal Highway.*
3. *Notes the need for Transit New Zealand and appropriate local authorities to develop a detailed Western Corridor Implementation Plan, including a strategy for obtaining consents for a long term coastal corridor option.*
4. *Notes the resolution of the Transit New Zealand Board on the proposed Western Corridor Plan.*
5. *Notes Transmission Gully is recognised as the long term road solution for the Western Corridor.*
6. *Notes that if the consenting process for the upgraded Coastal Highway denies an upgrade of a major component of the Coastal Highway, then the options, including Transmission Gully, will need to be revisited, and the region can approach the Government for funding support.*

7. *Approves the terms of reference for the Western Corridor Plan hearing subcommittee shown in Attachment 4.*
8. *Appoints Cr McDavitt as Chairman of the Western Corridor Plan hearing subcommittee.*
9. *Appoints the remainder of the Western Corridor Plan hearing subcommittee.*

Report prepared by: Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Background report

Attachment 2: Proposed Western Corridor Plan

Attachment 3: Transit New Zealand Board resolution

Attachment 4: Terms of Reference for the Western Corridor Plan hearing subcommittee