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Committee Regional Land Transport
Author Joe Hewitt, Manager, Transport Strategy
Development

The use of Corridor Plans in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy

1. Purpose

To outline the key pros and cons of utilising a corridor-based approach when planning the regional strategic transport network in order to work towards achieving the outcomes sought by the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS).

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The Committee, at its meeting on 9 April 2008, asked for a report on the corridor planning approach. Since 1999 a corridor planning approach has been utilised in the RLTS to gain a perspective of the issues, trends and interventions proposed in each transport corridor of the region. Corridor plans also assist in assessing how proposed interventions interact with each other and with the existing regional and local network.

Transport corridors typically follow areas of geographical boundaries where transport movements across the boundaries are relatively simple. This is the case for all of the transport corridors within the Wellington region and is one of the reasons why a corridor-based approach works for us.

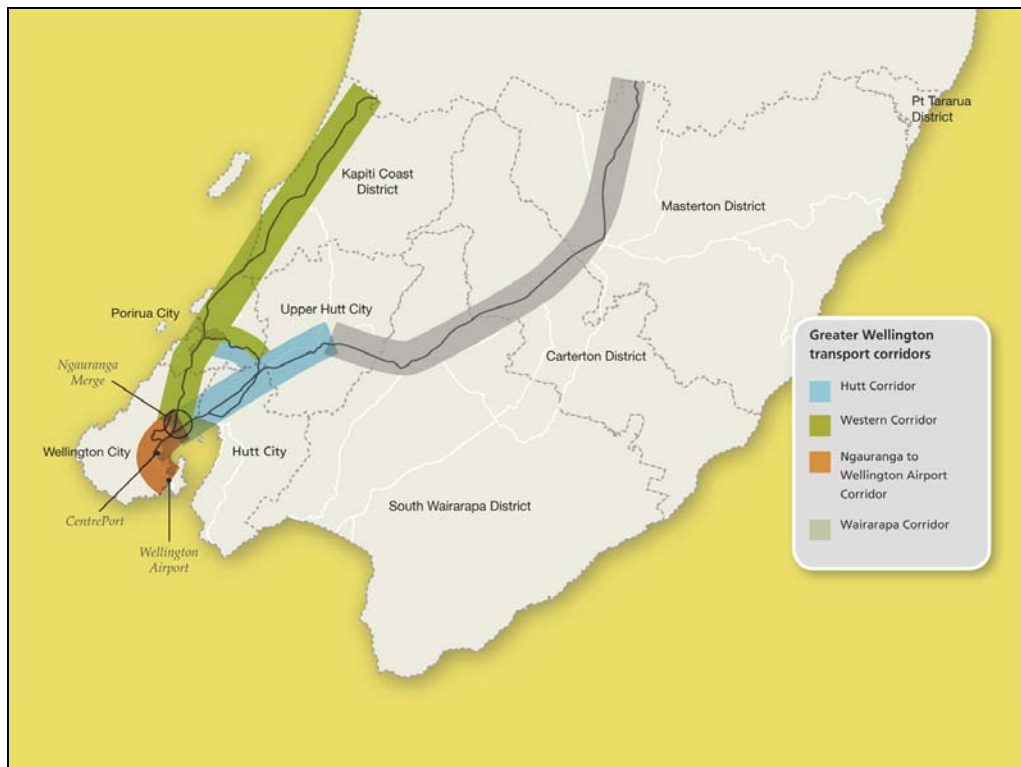
The Wellington region has four main transport corridors as follows:

- Western Corridor – Otaki to Ngauranga Merge, including SH1 the proposed Western Link Road and the North Island Main Trunk rail line with connecting bus services. It has two main centres of Porirua and Paraparaumu.

- Hutt Corridor – Upper Hutt to Ngauranga Merge, including SH2 and the Wairarapa train line and bus network. It has two main centres of Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt.
- Wairarapa Corridor – Mount Bruce to Upper Hutt, including SH2 and the Wairarapa train line and related connecting bus services. It has one main centre of Masterton and three smaller centres.
- Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor – Ngauranga Merge to Wellington Airport, including SH1 that passes the region’s port, CentrePort, and the North Island Main Trunk rail line. The Corridor also includes the key route to Wellington hospital.

East – West connections such as SH58, Akatarawa Road and the potential Grenada – Gracefield Link are addressed through both the Western and Hutt Corridor Plans. As these are road-focussed routes they are not treated as separate corridors.

The corridors are graphically represented on a map of the region below:



Corridor plans need to respond to the strategic direction set by the RLTS and identify the needs and desired outcomes specific to each corridor. They provide comprehensive action programmes with responsibilities, targets and timeframes identified. The action programmes include aspects of infrastructure improvements to road, rail, cycling and pedestrian facilities as well as elements of travel demand management.

4. Discussion

Corridor plans have an important role in implementing the strategic direction and outcomes sought by the RLTS. The corridor planning approach has pros and cons as set out in the following paragraphs.

4.1 Corridor Focus

A corridor based approach allows transportation planning to focus on geographically distinct areas and their associated networks. This allows a more detailed and comprehensive review of the issues than would be possible if we were to review the region's whole network at once.

The challenge is to ensure the planning process takes into account the full strategic context. This includes integration with the adjacent corridor(s). This is achieved in part through the establishment of the outcomes, targets and corridor visions in the RLTS. The plans need to give effect to the outcomes sought by the Strategy as well as consideration of surrounding corridor(s) issues.

Work is also routinely done as part of corridor planning processes to assess cross-corridor issues. A recent example of consideration of neighbouring corridor issues took place with the background modelling undertaken for the Ngauranga to Wellington Airport draft plan development. Modelling work assessed the impacts of people travelling into and out of the Wellington CBD from the Western and Hutt Corridors.

4.2 Consultation

A corridor based approach encourages local communities to engage in studies of most relevance to them. Judging by the public interest in the recent corridor plan processes (for example, over 6,000 submissions were received on the third stage of consultation of the Western Corridor Plan; approx 4,600 were received on the second stage of the Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan) the public appears to be willing to engage in the more detailed corridor planning processes. However, the community input may miss the wider regional context and needs. This issue is managed by reference back to the RLTS vision and outcomes.

4.3 Timing and Resourcing

Our corridor based approach has the corridor plans sit separately from the RLTS. This allows for corridor plans to be more easily reviewed to take account of the latest information relevant to that corridor. With the current rolling reviews of the corridor plans (see 4.4 below), we never have a full, up-to-date picture of the region's needs at any one point in time. However, we have almost completed a first version of all of the corridor plans, so reviewing them in the future will be much quicker than the time required to prepare the plans. This will enable the reviewed plans to be more current.

From an administrative point of view, the corridor based approach also allows the workload to be spread over a feasible timeframe, thus allowing efficient and cost effective use of resources. If the whole network was to be reviewed at one time then either more resources would be required or the scope/detail covered by the review would need to be reduced.

4.4 Corridor Plan Review Process

Rolling reviews of the corridor plans ensures alignment of the plans with any new strategic framework provided by the RLTS and any new information coming to light. The review programme for these plans is set out below. The plans will need to give effect to the new strategic framework provided by the RLTS.

Document	Last approved	Next review
Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan		Underway, due Oct 2008
Wairarapa Corridor Plan	Dec 2004	2009 – 10
Hutt Corridor Plan	Dec 2004	Underway, due Jan 2010
Western Corridor Plan	April 2006	2008 – 09

The corridor plans, which sit alongside and support the strategy, set out projects and activities considered appropriate at the time they were developed and approved, based on the best information available at that time. The plans require ongoing updates and review to ensure they give effect to the RLTS and reflect new information as it becomes available. In the future, officers will look for opportunities to bring the reviews closer together, where possible.

4.5 Alternatives

There are three alternatives to corridor planning; either a network-wide review or more detailed ‘segment’ studies, such as the Rimutaka Hill Road. The regional transport needs could also be segmented by needs, such as safety or sustainability.

Network-wide reviews will be difficult to undertake for the reasons outlined above. More detailed segment studies will make it difficult to achieve effective integration of the network.

The scope of future reviews will be at the discretion of the Committee. Consideration will need to be given to avoiding any unnecessarily long, onerous and costly studies or processes. Where comprehensive reviews are needed, they will involve studies and sector assessments, and one or more stages of public consultation, depending on whether options are involved. Where smaller studies within corridors are required, it may be up to one agency to lead the process and use the outcome of the study to input into the next wider corridor review. Current examples of this include the Transit NZ led Kapiti Strategic Study.

It is believed that all these approaches to regional transport planning are appropriate because they allow us to look at our needs from a high level as well as allowing more focussed examination of specific issues and needs.

4.6 Relationship to the Regional Land Transport Programme

The projects and packages of projects identified in corridor plans are brought together in the Regional Land Transport Programme. This is where all of the region's projects and packages of projects are reviewed in unison to see how the projects and packages contribute to the objectives and outcomes of the RLTS. Projects and packages are then prioritised for funding.

A major review of the Regional Land Transport Programme is scheduled for later this year and will take account of any direction set out in the Government Policy Statement, Land Transport Management Amendment Bill (when enacted), Update of the New Zealand Transport Strategy and any new information coming out of various planning and review processes that are currently underway.

5. Conclusion

The corridor approach taken in the RLTS since 1999 is an appropriate approach for carrying out the detailed planning of the region's strategic transport network in a manageable way. There are no clear reasons to support changing from this approach.

6. Communication

There are no matters for communication resulting from this paper.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. **Receives** the report.*
- 2. **Notes** the contents of the report.*
- 3. **Endorses** the corridor planning approach currently used in the RLTS.*

Report prepared by:



Joe Hewitt
Manager Transport Strategy
Development

Report approved by:

Jane Davis
Divisional Manager Transport
Policy and Strategy