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Committee Regional Transport
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Proposed Variation to the Wellington Regional Land Transport Programme 2009 - 2012

1. Purpose

To seek the Committee's support for a variation of the Wellington Regional Land Transport Programme at the request of Hutt City Council.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report are subject to the legislative requirements of the Land Transport Management Act (the Act) 2003¹. Section 18D(5) of the Act requires the Committee to determine if a proposed variation to the RLTP is significant, in accordance with its significance policy adopted under 106(2) and included in the programme.

An assessment of the variation against the RLTP significance policy is set out in section 6 of this report and concludes the matter does not trigger the requirement to carry out consultation.

3. Background

3.1 The Regional Land Transport Programme

The Act requires the Regional Transport Committee to prepare and consult on a Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP) every three years. The current programme (2009 – 2012) was prepared by this Committee and subsequently approved by Greater Wellington in June 2009.

The RLTP contains all the land transport activities proposed to be undertaken throughout the region over 3 financial years, the regional priority of those activities, indicative activities over the following 3 financial years, plus a 10 year financial forecast.

¹ As amended by the Land Transport Management Act 2008.

The activities in the RLTP are submitted by the New Zealand Transport Agency (the Agency) and 'Approved Organisations' (including the eight territorial authorities and Greater Wellington). The activities in the programme relate to passenger transport, walking and cycling, travel demand management, local roads, state highways, and the movement of freight.

4. Process for considering a variation

The Act includes provision for changes to some types of activities without the need for a variation to the RLTP. However, this provision does not apply to the proposed new activity outlined below. As such, the process for dealing with requests for variations must be followed.

Section 18D of the Act states that if a good reason exists to do so, the Committee may prepare a variation to its RLTP during the three years to which it applies. This can be at the request of an Approved Organisation or the Agency, or on the committee's own motion. In this case, the request has been made by Hutt City Council.

Section 18D(4) requires the Committee to consider any variation request promptly.

Section 18D(5) notes that consultation is not required for any variation that is not significant.

If the Committee does not wish to accept the request to vary the RLTP, it must give written advice to Hutt City Council of that decision and the reasons for the decision.

5. Proposed variation

Hutt City Council has requested that a new study titled 'Hutt City Traffic Model' be included in the RLTP so that they may seek funding from the National Land Transport Fund.

The new activity has a total cost of \$200,000 and is expected to commence during the 2009/10 financial year. The cost would be shared by Hutt City Council and the Agency.

The main study objective is to establish a long-term plan for the Lower Hutt CBD and its approaches using a realistic traffic model of the CBD and to test several access improvement scenarios. Hutt City does have an existing traffic model but it is not capable of modelling the effects of the SH2 Dowse to Petone improvements, or the Queensgate shopping mall.

The study will seek to understand the above effects and test improvement scenarios including the construction of a new bridge over the Hutt River, an improved CBD passenger transport interchange, changing through routes, a parking management strategy and a CBD improvement programme. It will also look at the effect of improving flood protection for the CBD which will impact car parking.

While this study had not been identified when the regional programme was being developed in early 2009, the need for it has since become evident. The early timing is important, particularly as the Agency begins its investigations into the Melling interchange upgrade for which design is scheduled to commence in 2011/12.

Based on the Committee's prioritisation approach, transport planning studies are second priority activities. Therefore this new activity would fall within the list of second priority activities in the programme.

Details of the proposed new activity for inclusion in Table 1 of the existing RLTP are set out in **Attachment 1**.

6. Determination of Significance

Officers have assessed the significance of the proposed variation, for the purpose of consultation, against the adopted RLTP significance policy.

The significance policy is set out in section 14 (page 40 and 41) of the RLTP.

In making a determination of significance (against the criteria set out in section 14.3 of the RLTP), officers noted that the proposed variation:

- Would not result in a material change to the balance of strategic investment in the programme;
- Would not materially impact on the contribution towards NZTS objectives and/or GPS targets;
- Would have little or no impact on residents, and;
- Would not affect the integrity of the RLTP, including its overall affordability.

As such, officers consider that the proposed variation to the RLTP is not significant and does not trigger the requirement to carry out consultation.

7. Next Steps

If the Committee agrees to the variation request, it will then be forwarded to Greater Wellington for approval. As is the case with the programme itself, Greater Wellington must either accept the recommendation or it can refer the variation back to the Committee once with a request that it be reconsidered.

Once the variation has been approved by Greater Wellington, the variation is then forwarded to the Agency for consideration of inclusion in the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) for funding.

There is no obligation for the Agency to vary the NLTP by including the new activity. However, it must give written reasons for any decision not to do so. In this case, the Agency has already agreed under officer delegation to include the new activity in the NLTP, subject to the RLTP being varied accordingly.

8. Voting

Section 107(1) of the Act states that objective and interest representatives have full speaking rights, but are not entitled to vote on matters related to regional land transport programmes. As the subject matter of this report does relate to the regional land transport programme, objective and interest representatives **may not** vote on the resolutions.

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Agrees to vary the Regional Land Transport Programme 2009 – 2012 by adding the proposed new activity, set out in Attachment 1, to the programme as a second priority activity.***
4. ***Agrees to recommend the variation to the Regional Land Transport Programme 2009 – 2012, as set out in Attachment 1, to Greater Wellington for its consideration.***

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Attachment 1: Variation to the Wellington Regional Land Transport Programme 2010 - 2040