

File No. TP/3/3/2  
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16 May 2001

Chief Executive Officer  
Wellington City Council  
P O Box 2199  
WELLINGTON

Dear Sir

### **Submission on Wellington City Council Draft Annual Plan 2001/02**

The Passenger Transport Committee of the Wellington Regional Council resolved to forward a submission on your draft Annual Plan at its last meeting. This submission therefore addresses only transport planning issues, pp 161-181.

The Wellington Central area is the heart of the region economically, socially and culturally. Access to it and around it is a matter of regional significance. In recent years we note there has been a declining level of service for motorists, public transport and pedestrians. This decline in service is mainly caused by increasing demand for access, in itself an indicator of positive achievement elsewhere, not being matched by increases in capacity. The result is that users experience increasing delays. Where services (eg. bus services) have been increased, patrons experience more congestion and delay on your inner-city streets than the arterial roads. Bus operators advise us that inner city congestion is now causing significant timetable slippage, especially in the evening peak. In summary, your transport infrastructure planning is not keeping pace with your city development, continuance of this situation must eventually undermine city development itself.

#### **Transport Planning Resources**

We feel that over recent years the City Council has not put resources into transport planning commensurate with its role as manager of the street network in the region's major destination. The Regional Council therefore appreciates that the City Council is now further developing its City Transport Strategy, and is working with us in developing a Wellington Central Corridor Plan.

We are aware your consultants Parsons Brinkerhoff advised you to take a more active interest in regional transport matters, in particular, regional urban growth strategies. Regardless of regional transport issues outside Wellington City, we foresee needs over the next 10 years, needs to examine the city's own southern, eastern, western and northern corridors more closely because of increasing (and changing) user demand versus limited infrastructure supply and wonder whether your 10 year financial strategy adequately reflects the resources that will be required for these tasks.

As an example, section 42I of the Transit New Zealand Act requires a territorial local authority to ‘consult’ with the Regional Council over its annual District Roding Programme. Our interpretation of this has been that the territorial local authority sends a written copy of its DRP to the Regional Council for comment. Other territorial local authority’s in the region have no difficulty meeting this existing requirement but Wellington City Council has had difficulty in recent years. A Council that has difficulty meeting existing requirements is not well placed to service new tasks.

### **Bus Priority Measures**

We note that City Council publications frequently highlight that “supporting the public transport network is a major commitment for the Council” (p 179 of DAP). We therefore look at your DAP with interest to see how this is translated into action and intention. We find that you will make a net gain from your bus shelter activity (advertising income) of \$272,000 (p 179) of which you will be contributing \$25,000 to other shelter maintenance. This does not convince as “a major commitment”. Can we suggest that it would now be appropriate to expedite the major, medium and minor bus priority projects already jointly identified, but not yet progressed:

Minor	Hutt Road, Kaiwharawhara Road
Medium	Karori (Chaytor Street end), Newtown (Adelaide Road)
Major	Manners/Dixon Street

As costs for these projects would be borne by the regional ratepayer and Transfund these are not financial commitments to the City Council, but we acknowledge that they are commitments to you as road controlling authority. Planning for the Manners/Dixon project should be progressed now because:

- (a) there is a present need (seen in inner city bus congestion) and
- (b) construction of the Inner City Bypass will provide an answer for the main impediment, lack of alternative capacity for arterial motorists.

A time restricted (to evening peak) bus priority lane should accommodate the expected retailer resistance. Given that these projects take 1-2 years to plan, consult on and design, the first stages should be begun this financial year.

### **Pedestrian Network**

A pedestrian-friendly environment in the inner city should be a priority. While recognising Council’s amenity, shelter and kerb extension work, we believe there is room to improve pedestrian measures for the specially significant inner city pedestrian; there seems to be no recognition in the 10- Year Plan that the Inner City Bypass provides both opportunity and need for pedestrian improvements through Te Aro – another example of a lack of transport planning.

Significant improvements can be achieved without great financial cost -- pedestrian delay (at intersections, from unfriendly traffic signal timings) is a known, measured discomfort factor for commuting pedestrians. Our current signal timings are set to favour the motorist and penalise the pedestrian even in inner city streets to and from the railway station. This is at least inequitable and can be corrected cheaply. (The major cost is to the motorist, but recall that these are inner city streets, close to the railway station, so the priority being given to the motorist is questionable at these sites).

## **Conclusion**

Our conclusion is that there is a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of City Council performance in transport planning and public transport support in particular. The Draft Annual Plan goes only part-way towards addressing that gap, more worryingly there appears to be little change in the balance of the 10-Year Strategy.

Yours sincerely

TERRY McDAVITT  
Chair, Regional Land Transport Committee