

8 June 2009

Freepost 118112
Proposed Regional Policy Statement
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Wellington 6142

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region

Please find attached the NZ Transport Agency's submission on the Proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on Ph (04) 894-5247 or selwyn.blackmore@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Selwyn Blackmore
Wellington Integrated Planning Manager

Encl.

Pursuant to Clause 6 of the first Schedule and Section 79 of the Resource Management Act 1991

Submission on proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region

To: Freepost 118112
Proposed Regional Policy Statement
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Wellington 6142

From: New Zealand Transport Agency
PO Box 5084
Lambton Quay
WELLINGTON 6145

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1. **The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) supports in part the Proposed Wellington Regional Policy Statement (*Proposed RPS*).**
 2. **The specific provisions of the Proposed RPS that the NZTA's submission relates to are as follows:**

The Proposed RPS in its entirety.

3. **The NZTA's submission is that:**

3.1 NZ Transport Agency's statutory responsibility

The NZTA was established on 1 August 2008 through amendments to the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (*LTMA*). The NZTA is a new Crown entity created by combining the functions of Land Transport New Zealand and Transit New Zealand.

The NZTA's statutory objective is to undertake its functions in a way that *contributes to an affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable land transport system.*

When undertaking its functions, the NZTA must:

- exhibit a sense of social and environmental responsibility;
- give effect to the Government Policy Statement (*GPS*) on transport;
- contribute to the objectives of the updated New Zealand Transport Strategy (*NZTS*); and

- have regard to other policy documents and legislation, such as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy and the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

3.2 New Government policy statement and roads of national significance

In May 2009 the Government amended the GPS¹. Many of the amendments to the GPS are of direct relevance to the Proposed RPS. In particular, the GPS makes it clear that the Government's priority for investment in the land transport system is to increase national economic growth and productivity by investing in high quality infrastructure projects and transport services that encourage the efficient movement of freight and people. Of particular importance to this priority are:

- investing in the state highway network as a key to the efficient movement of freight and people; and
- generating better value for money from the Government's investment across all land transport activity classes and enhancing the economic efficiency of individual projects.

The Government expects to realise the following impacts/benefits from its future investment in the land transport network over the short to medium term:

- Improvements in the provision of infrastructure and services that enhance transport efficiency and lower the cost of transportation through:
 - improvements in journey time reliability;
 - easing of severe congestion;
 - more efficient freight supply chains; and
 - better use of existing transport capacity.
- Better access to markets, employment and areas that contribute to economic growth;
- A secure and resilient transport network;
- Reductions in deaths and serious injuries as a result of road crashes;
- More transport choices, particularly for those with limited access to a car where appropriate;
- Reductions in adverse environmental effects from land transport; and
- Contributions to positive health outcomes.

To help achieve the above impacts the Government expects that the relevant national, regional and local funding decision making processes will take into account the following factors:

- The priority for national economic growth and productivity, which includes further developing seven *Roads of National Significance*;
- Considering networks from a national perspective;
- Achieving value for money;

¹ <http://www.mot.govt.nz/assets/Downloads/Final-GPS-May-09.pdf>

- Encouraging integrated planning;
- Making best use of existing networks and infrastructure;
- Implementing and fostering a co-ordinated approach; and
- Considering the impact of volatile fuel prices.

Of particular relevance to the Proposed RPS is the GPS's promotion and encouragement of *integrated planning* as follows²:

“Integrated planning is important to ensure that decisions made in relation to land use, transport and urban design collectively contribute to the efficient use of public funds and achieve the government's objectives for transport and New Zealand. To achieve integration, transport strategies and packages of activities should be developed alongside, and be clearly connected to, land use strategies and implementation plans.

The government is particularly concerned to see that better integration of land use, transport planning and urban design activity contribute to national economic growth and productivity. In particular, land use and transport planning processes should ensure that:

- *the transport needs of future growth are considered in planning and developing the transport system*
- *future transport corridors are safeguarded from other development*
- *the long term sustainability of land transport funding is secured through ensuring that urban growth meets the costs of the infrastructural impact that such growth generates for the wider transport network*
- *opportunities are created for better integration within and between transport modes.”*

With regard to *Roads of National Significance*, the GPS lists seven such roads of which one is the section of State highway 1 (SH1) between Levin and Wellington, including the *Transmission Gully* option. These roads are considered to be *essential routes* that require significant development in order to further reduce congestion, improve safety and to support economic growth and productivity. These seven roads are to be given priority when considering future funding investments in the land transport system.

The section of SH1 between Otaki and the Wellington International Airport already plays a vital economic role in moving people and freight both within and through the Wellington region. It provides crucial links to major transport mode and economic hub destinations such as the Wellington International Airport, CentrePort, the Cook Straight Ferry terminal, many of the region's western railway stations and Wellington City's central business district. Through the amended GPS, the Government now seeks to reinforce SH1's national and regional strategic role by investing and progressively improving it in order to increase economic growth and productivity and to improve road safety.

Accordingly, it is vital that the Proposed RPS recognises the Government's intention to invest in the maintenance and development of the land transport network, in particular SH1, and the benefits and/or transport

² Government Policy Statement on Land Transport Funding 2009/10-2018/19, page 16

impacts that it seeks to achieve from its future funding investments in the network.

3.3 Role of regional policy statements and the transport system

The NZTA seeks that regional policy statements take a proactive and directive approach to transportation issues, transport infrastructure and the integration of transport and land use in order to help to achieve the objectives and targets of the NZTS and amended GPS as well as the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991. In particular, the NZTA seeks that regional policy statements help to lay the foundations for the achievement of the following outcomes:

- land use and transport are integrated to ensure that growth and development and transport infrastructure is planned and delivered together;
- different modes of transport are integrated to enable maximum travel choice and flexibility;
- the state highway and arterial road networks are as safe, efficient, practicable for all road users and ultimately assist with economic growth and productivity;
- land use and development growth is planned in conjunction with all transport providers;
- sustainable travel behaviour is encouraged through management of traffic growth and through an increase in the proportion of travel undertaken by foot, by cycle and/or by public transport;
- the transport system is financially sustainable as optimal use has been made of existing network assets; and
- land use planning and urban design is coordinated in a way that helps to reduce the need for new transport infrastructure.

3.4 Specific comments on the Proposed Wellington Regional Policy Statement

Subject to the amendments sought below, the NZTA supports the overall intent and direction of the Proposed RPS.

The NZTA's specific comments and amendments that it seeks to the Proposed RPS are as follows:

Chapter 1

- 3.4.1 Chapter 1 refers to *Other strategies and companion statutes* on page's 4 and 5. The NZTA considers it important that the LTMA is recognised in the Proposed RPS, and therefore seeks that it be specifically referred to as a companion statute example in the relevant paragraph on page 5.

Chapter Three

- 3.4.2 Chapter Three provides an overview of the significant resource management issues for the Wellington region. There are two key sections of Chapter Three that are of particular interest to the NZTA these being *Section 3.3 (Energy, infrastructure and waste)* and *Section 3.9 (Regional form, design and function)*. The NZTA also notes, and supports, the reference to the important role of the region's infrastructure in the coastal environment as set out in *Section 3.2 (Coastal environment)* on page 19.
- 3.4.3 Section 3.3 provides an overview of the importance of the role that *Infrastructure* plays in the Wellington region. The NZTA notes that the region's energy resource management issues, from both a regional and national perspective, have been extensively covered on page's 27 and 28. By comparison the coverage of the region's important infrastructure resource management issues is much more limited in scope.
- 3.4.4 Accordingly, the NZTA seeks that the relevant *Infrastructure* paragraph on page 28 be expanded to provide better recognition of the important role that infrastructure plays in the region, and on a national basis, and the resource management issues associated with maintaining and improving the region's infrastructure. The NZTA seeks that such an amendment be implemented by providing a separate paragraph on the issues associated with each infrastructure activity listed on page 28. Such an amendment would go some way to strengthening the relationship between the "infrastructure resource management issues" in the introduction to Section 3.3 and the corresponding *Objective 10* on page's 31 and 32. In addition, the amendment should also specifically note that regionally significant infrastructure can have adverse effects on the environment and that there is a need to ensure that the benefits of infrastructure and its effects on the environment are balanced and managed appropriately.
- 3.4.5 The NZTA notes the references to the effects of *incompatible land use* on infrastructure on page 29. For the reasons detailed below in paragraph 3.4.12, the effects of incompatible land use on infrastructure are not always necessarily located *under, over* or *alongside* infrastructure they can also be located *nearby*. Accordingly, the NZTA seeks that the reference on page 29 be amended in order for the adverse effects of incompatible land use activities that are located *near* infrastructure to be better recognised.
- 3.4.6 Section 3.9 provides an overview of the importance that *regional form, design and function* plays in the region and lists three associated resource management issues. These issues are supported by the NZTA, however it seeks that *Resource*

Management Issue 3.9.3 (Integration of land use and transportation) on page 58 be amended so that it recognises that a lack of integrated land and transport planning can also have adverse road safety and community severance effects.

Chapter Four – Section 4.1

- 3.4.7 *Chapter Four – Section 4.1* contains regulatory policies that *must be given effect* to in regional, city or district plans. In addition, the NZTA notes that the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy (WRLTS) must not be inconsistent with these policies. The NZTA is particularly interested in those policies and provisions that relate to *Energy, infrastructure and waste* and *Regional form, design and function*.
- 3.4.8 The NZTA supports the inclusion of *Policy 6* that requires district and regional plans to recognise the benefits of regionally significant infrastructure. However, the NZTA seeks that *Policy 6(a)(i)* on page 83 be amended to include references to *freight* and *safety*. Such an amendment would better recognise the importance of moving freight both within and through the region and the importance of road safety.
- 3.4.9 Notwithstanding *Policy 6*'s references to the WRLTS's *Strategic Transport Network*, the NZTA seeks that its explanation be amended to explicitly recognise the economic growth and productivity benefits of maintaining and improving SH1. This would help to recognise that SH1 is a *Road of National Significance* pursuant to the amended GPS. In addition, the explanation should also be amended to explicitly recognise the linkage between *Policy 6(a)(i)* and the WRLTS to ensure that its objectives, outcomes and targets are given particular regard to.
- 3.4.10 *Policy 6* (and the Proposed RPS in general) does not directly address how decision makers are to balance or to manage the need to provide for infrastructure and the effects that infrastructure development may have on the environment, and in particular on the "natural environment" (e.g. freshwater and coastal environments). As such, the NZTA seeks that *Policy 6* be amended, or alternatively that a new policy be inserted underneath *Policy 6*, that provides guidance to decision makers on how they might balance and/or manage the benefits and effects of infrastructure development.
- 3.4.11 The NZTA supports the references to incompatible land uses and development in *Policy 7* as such activities can adversely affect the safe and efficient operation of the transport network. *Policy 7*, and in particular some of the outcomes it seeks to achieve, is strategically linked to *Objective's 21(h), 21(i)* and *21(j)* that relate to *regional form, design and function*. As such, the linkage between *Policy 7* and *Objective 21* should be provided for on page 84.

- 3.4.12 The explanation to Policy 7 refers to incompatible land uses that are located “*under, over or alongside*” infrastructure. Although the NZTA supports this statement, it notes however that incompatible land uses can also be located *near* infrastructure. For example, a land use activity located on an arterial road that connects to a state highway can adversely affect its safe and efficient operation as the activity may generate enough traffic to either require the state highway’s intersection to be upgraded or require its capacity to be increased in order to accommodate the additional traffic being generated. Accordingly, the NZTA seeks that the relevant sentence on page 84 be amended to recognise and provide for the adverse effects that incompatible land uses can have on state highways that are located “nearby”.
- 3.4.13 The fourth paragraph of the explanation to Policy 7 notes that not all land use activities “*under, over or alongside*” infrastructure will be prevented and that councils will need to ensure that the activities they provide for in district/regional plans are compatible with the relevant infrastructure. The NZTA supports such guidance and would like to note that *additional* policy measures such as enabling financial contributions to be taken on behalf of the NZTA and/or requiring major development proposals to be subject integrated transportation assessments can also be useful planning tools for ensuring such compatibility. As such, the NZTA seeks that this paragraph be amended accordingly.
- 3.4.14 The NZTA notes that consultation is required with the operator of the national grid in order to identify appropriate buffer corridors pursuant to the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission. The NZTA seeks that the relevant paragraph in Policy 7 be expanded to require similar consultation to be undertaken with other infrastructure operators/providers.
- 3.4.15 The reference to the WRLTS in the second paragraph of *Policy 8* on page 85 should be amended to reflect that *regional land transport strategies* are now prepared pursuant to section 73 of the LTMA for a 30 year timeframe. A similar amendment needs to be also made to *Method 3* on page 137.
- 3.4.16 The NZTA notes that there are no *regional form, design and function* policies in Section 4.1 that require district plans to discourage new subdivision and/or development from locations where existing infrastructure, in particular the strategic roading network, is not capable or likely to be capable of supporting any major new land use development. Notwithstanding the requirements of Policy 7, the NZTA seeks that a new policy be added that would require district plans deal with such issues “upfront” by identifying locations that are not suitable for major land use development rather than it being a matter that should be

given regard to when assessing resource consent applications and plan changes pursuant to *Policy's 53 to 59*.

Chapter Four – Section 4.2

- 3.4.17 *Chapter 4 - Section 4.2* contains those policies that need to be given regard to when assessing and deciding on resource consents, notices of requirement, or when changing or replacing district or regional plans.
- 3.4.18 The NZTA supports *Policy 38*, and in particular *Policy 38(a)* which requires particular regard to be given to the benefits of regionally significant infrastructure when assessing notice of requirements and resource consents.
- 3.4.19 As with *Policy 6*, the NZTA seeks that the first bullet point of the explanation to *Policy 38* on page 106 be amended to include references to *freight* and *safety*.
- 3.4.20 The NZTA seeks that the explanation to *Policy 38* be amended in order to explicitly note the economic growth and productivity benefits of maintaining and improving SH1. This would help to recognise that SH1 is a *Road of National Significance* pursuant to the amended GPS. In addition, the explanation should also be amended to explicitly recognise the linkage between *Policy 38(a)* and the WRLTS to ensure that its objectives, outcomes and targets are given particular regard to.
- 3.4.21 The NZTA notes that *Policy 38(a)*, relating to regionally significant infrastructure, will cease to have effect once *Policy 6* is given effect to in the relevant district and regional plans. The NZTA further notes however that those parts of *Policy 38* that relate to renewable energy do not cease to have effect, even though *Policy 6* also directs plans to recognise the benefits of renewable energy. The NZTA considers it important that the Proposed RPS provides ongoing regional guidance in relation to regionally significant infrastructure, and not delegate this guidance to district and regional plans. As such, the NZTA seeks that *Policy 38(a)* does not cease once *Policy 6* has been given effect to.
- 3.4.22 *Policy's 53 to 58* set out the *regional form, design and function* matters that need to be given particular regard to when considering resource consents, notices or requirement and district/regional plan changes/variations.
- 3.4.23 The NZTA supports *Policy 54*, and in particular the matters that consent authorities are required to have regard to in the assessment process (i.e. *Policy's 54(a), (b) and (c)*). It is vital that structure planning include a robust assessment of the transportation effects of a proposal, and in particular if the

proposal seeks to change the existing land use to one that is more “transport intensive”. One way of achieving this is to require structure plans (and indeed relevant district plan changes/ variations and major trip generating activities) to be subject to an integrated transportation assessment. As such, the NZTA seeks that the explanation for Policy 54 on page 120 be amended to advise accordingly.

- 3.4.24 Notwithstanding *Policy's 56 and 57*, the NZTA seeks that a new assessment matter be added to *Policy 55* that requires regard to be given to the effects of rural development on the efficient and safe use of the transport network.
- 3.4.25 The NZTA seeks that *Policy 57(a)* be amended to require regard to be also given to the effects of land use development on the *safety* of the existing infrastructure. It also seeks that the explanation be amended to make it explicit that the cumulative effect of the development on infrastructure also needs to be assessed when considering giving effect to Policy 57.
- 3.4.26 Protecting regionally significant infrastructure and maintaining *regional form, design and function* are strategically linked. As such, *Policy's 53 to 57* should refer to Policy 7 as a policy that the needs to be considered when assessing the matters set out in *Policy's 53 to 58*.
- 3.4.27 The NZTA seeks that the definition of regionally significant infrastructure be amended to make it clear that it includes *existing* and *proposed* infrastructure. Such an amendment would require the sentence “*Regionally significant infrastructure includes:*” as it appears in *Policy's 6, 7 and 38* and in the relevant definition on page 174 to be amended to include references to “*existing and proposed*”.

4. The NZTA seeks the following decision from the Greater Wellington Regional Council:

Approved the Proposed RPS subject to the inclusion of the following amendments:

- 4.1 Amend the first paragraph on page 5 as follows (or words to the same effect):

There are also a number of statutes that can be thought of as companions of the Resource Management Act, in that their purpose can be interpreted as further supporting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources (e.g. the Conservation Act, the Reserves Act, ~~and~~ the Local Government Act and Land Transport Management Act 2003).....

- 4.2 Amend the *Infrastructure* paragraph on page 28 by providing a paragraph on the benefits and the resource management issues for each

infrastructure activity that has been listed in the second paragraph on page 28. For significant and/or strategic roads, the paragraph should relate to the benefits and issues as identified in the WRLTS for the *Strategic Transport Network* plus noting that SH1 is now a *Road of National Significance* as well as referring to the important issue of integrated land use and transport planning. The paragraph should also note that infrastructure can have adverse effects on the environment and that there is a need to ensure that the benefits of infrastructure and its effects are balanced and managed appropriately.

- 4.3 Amend *Resource Management Issue 3.3.2 (Infrastructure)* on page 29 as follows (or words to the same effect):

Infrastructure enables communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing. The management, use and operation of infrastructure can be adversely affected when incompatible land uses occur under, over, on, or alongside or near.

- 4.4 Amend *Resource Management Issue 3.9.3 (Integration of land use and transportation)* on page 58 as follows (or words to the same effect):

- (c) reduced opportunities for alternate means of travel (such as walking and cycling), increased community severance and increased costs associated with upgrading roads
- (d) increased road congestion leading to restricted movement of goods and services to, from and within the region, and compromising the efficient and safe operation of the transport network.

- 4.5 Amend Policy 6 (a)(i) on page 83 as follows (or words to the same effect):

District and regional plans shall include policies that recognise:

- (a) the social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits of regionally significant infrastructure including:
- (i) people and freight can travel to, from and around the region efficiently and safely;

- 4.6 Amend the explanation to Policy 6 by adding a paragraph that recognises the national benefits of the state highway network, in particular SH1, and how improvements to it will assist in achieving the objectives, outcomes and targets of the WRLTS and the Government's objectives for transport and economic growth and productivity.

- 4.7 Amend Policy 6, or alternatively add a new policy underneath Policy 6, that provides guidance to councils on how to balance the Proposed RPS's competing infrastructure and environment considerations as follows:

District and regional plans shall include policies that:

- Recognise that the construction, operation and maintenance of regionally significant infrastructure may affect the environment (including aspects of the environment highlighted for protection in this statement); and

- Allow for such effects, provided they are remedied or mitigated to the extent practicable.

4.8 Amend Policy 7's "*table, objective, method and policy box*" on the left hand side of page 84 as follows (or words to the same effect):

Objective 10 & 21

4.9 Amend the second to last paragraph of the explanation to Policy 7 on page 84 as follows (or words to the same effect):

Protecting regionally significant infrastructure does not mean that all land uses or activities under, over, ~~or~~ alongside or near are prevented. The Wellington Regional Council and city and district councils will need to ensure that activities provided for in a district or regional plan are compatible with the efficient operation and maintenance of the infrastructure and any effects that may be associated with that infrastructure and to include policies and rules that enable the effects of such activities on regionally significant infrastructure to be robustly assessed.

4.10 Amend the last paragraph of the explanation to Policy 7 on page 84 by adding the following sentence (or words to the same effect):

Policy 11 of the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission requires that, in achieving protection for the transmission network, consultation occurs with the operator of the national grid to identify appropriate buffer corridors. Similarly, consultation should occur with all operators of regionally significant infrastructure.

4.11 Amend the explanation to Policy 8 on page 85 as follows (or words to the same effect):

The *Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy* is a statutory document, prepared under the Land Transport Management Act 1998 2003, which Wellington Regional Council must produce. It is a strategy for the development of the region's land transport system over the next ~~10~~ 30 years and provides policies to guide regional transport decisions and action programmes.

4.12 Add a new *regional form, design and function* policy to Section 4.1 that requires district plans to include policies, rules and/or methods that will discourage new subdivision and/or development from locations where infrastructure capacity is limited and will remain limited for the foreseeable future.

4.13 Amend the first bullet point of the explanation to Policy 38 on page 106 as follows (or words to the same effect):

The benefits of regionally significant infrastructure include:

- people and freight can efficiently and safely move around the region, and to and from.

4.14 Amend the explanation to Policy 38 by adding a paragraph that recognises the national benefits of the state highway network, in particular SH1, and how improvements to it will assist in achieving the objectives, outcomes and targets of the WRLTS and the Government's objectives for transport and economic growth and productivity.

4.15 Amend the explanation to Policy 38 on page 106 so that Policy 38(a) will continue to have effect by deleting the following words:

- Policy 38(a) shall cease to have effect once policy 6 is given effect in a relevant district or regional plan.

4.16 Amend the sixth paragraph of the explanation to Policy 54 on page 120 as follows (or words to the same effect):

The content and detail of structure plans will vary depending on the scale of development. Notwithstanding this, structure plans, as a minimum, should address:

- integration with existing and proposed infrastructure services, such as, connections to existing and proposed transportation systems and provision of public and active transport linkages by undertaking an integrated transport assessment.

4.17 Amend Policy 55 by adding a new assessment matter to be given regard to on page 119 as follows (or words to the same effect):

- (e) the proposal effects, including cumulative impacts, on the efficient and safe use of the existing transport network.

4.18 Amend Policy 57(a) on page 121 as follows (or words to the same effect):

- (a) make efficient and safe use of existing infrastructure capacity; and/or

4.19 Amend the "*table, objective, method and policy boxes*" for Policy's 53 to 58 by requiring Policy 7 to also be a policy that needs to be considered.

4.20 Amend *Method 3* on page 137 as follows (or words to the same effect):

The process to amend the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy to implement policies 8, 9 and 32 will commence on, or before, the date on which Wellington Regional Council commences the review pursuant to section ~~176~~ 73 of the Land Transport Management Act ~~1998~~ 2003.

4.21 Amend the definition of "*Regionally significant infrastructure*", as it appears in Policy's 6, 7 and 38 and in the relevant definition on page 174, as follows:

Regionally significant infrastructure includes existing and proposed:

5. The NZTA does wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Dated at Wellington this the 8th day of June 2009.



Deborah Hume

Regional Director – Wellington, Marlborough, Nelson and Tasman

Pursuant to a delegation from the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Transport Agency.

Address for service: Selwyn Blackmore
Integrated Planning Manager
New Zealand Transport Agency
PO Box 5084
Lambton Quay
WELLINGTON

Telephone Number: (04) 894-5247
Fax Number: (04) 894 3305
E-mail: selwyn.blackmore@nzta.govt.nz