

Friday 16th February 2007

SUBMISSION ON THE REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT STRATEGY

To Greater Wellington Regional Council,

This submission is from Sustainable Future, 5 Cable Street, Wellington. We can be contacted at (04) 499 8888. We wish to be heard at the public hearing.

Sustainable Future provides independent research into timely and relevant issues facing New Zealanders and our environment. Two of our six staff members commute by cycle, and two use public transport.

We support the intent of this strategy because of its vision to deliver a system that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

Although we agree with the general objectives of the strategy, we wish to raise the following matters:

1. Climate Change

We would like the Regional Council to take more serious action on climate change by giving people more climate-friendly transport options. The Regional Council should provide drivers with disincentives to drive and incentives to use public transport, walk or cycle.

2. Alternative Transport to Cars

The majority of the Regional Council's transport budget should be going towards improving rail and bus networks, and increasing the safety and accessibility of cycling and walking. The outcomes and objectives listed in the New Zealand Transport Framework cite sustainability, environmental sustainability, and walking and cycling infrastructure. We have not observed any specific projects to increase the infrastructure of cycling and walking other than along the inner city bypass. We consider this inadequate considering that cycle casualty numbers were at their highest in a decade (refer page 16 of Draft Strategy – 112 casualties in 2005).

At the moment over half of the council's planned expenditure is going towards roading upgrades, construction and maintenance (\$1330m vs. \$1735m over 10 years – refer page 121). We would like to see these figures reversed and the following actions implemented:

Rail

- Increasing passenger capacity on trains at peak hours
- More express services from Kapiti and the Hutt at peak times
- Improved lighting and passenger security at train stations
- Increased frequency and reliability of all public transport services
- Allowing bicycles on trains for no charge, and allocating adequate space for bicycles.
- Increase park and ride capacities at all main train stations

- Add a small amount of track so that Kapiti and Hutt lines can operate on separate lines into Wellington station, to help eliminate peak time delays
- Implement a light rail link from Wellington station to Courtenay place, with a view to extending the rail-track to Wellington airport, or
- Consider turning Lambton Quay into a pedestrian mall with a tram connecting the railway station to a bus terminal at the Willis Street end.

Bus

- Trial free pram and bike racks on buses
- Supporting the upgrade of the electric bus fleet and ensuring consistent and reliable power to operators. In 2006 we observed many trolley bus outages at peak travel times
- Trial bio-fuel buses in areas without electric buses
- Provide reliable real-time information at major bus and train stops
- More frequent bus services around the bays connecting suburbs and shopping centres.

Cycle and Pedestrian

- Combine bike lanes and bus lanes while increasing bus driver awareness of cyclists
- Implement bike paths in inner cities- separate from motor roads.
- Reduce on-street parking in inner city to make way for more bike lanes.
- Increase motor-driver awareness and courtesy towards cyclists; foster a respect for cycling as a valid mode of transport
- Increase bicycle locking facilities, especially at train stations
- Give pedestrians priority over cars in inner Wellington City
- Enable cyclists to use pedestrian crossings or
- Where there are no cycle lanes create cycle crossing signals at traffic lights to give cyclists a head start.

3. Risk Management

In the event of a tsunami, floods or earthquake, Wellingtonians will need a range of alternative routes to exit the city, or routes to bring in emergency supplies (refer pages 24/25). In particular, where and how would an early warning system fit into a public evacuation system? We are unsure from the plan, how such risks will be taken into account. We suggest the Regional Council investigate and propose an optimal solution to take into account these hazards.

Implementing these measures would provide an opportunity for Wellington, as the nation's capital city, to show leadership and commitment towards achieving Helen Clark's goal to be truly sustainable.

Yours faithfully,

Wendy McGuinness, Caroline Ward, Amelie Goldberg
Sustainable Future