

# IMPROVING TRANSPORT IN WELLINGTON REGION WORKSHOP

Local Government Commission (LGC)  
Wairarapa, 23 June 2016

## Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Steve McDougall	CEO, McCarthy Transport
Sean McBride	Forest Manager, Juken NZ Ltd Southern North Island Wood Council (Board member)
Matt Wills	CCS Disability Action
Pru McLaren	CCS Disability Action
Steph Gundersen-Reid	CEO, Wairarapa Chamber of Commerce
Elizabeth McGruddy	Senior Policy Advisor, Federated Farmers
Roger Boulter	Boulter Consulting
Ian Gunn	Sustainable Wairarapa
Glen Mackie	Forest Owners Association
David Hilliard	JNL, Forest Owners Association
Vern Brasell	Dairy farmer (individual)

## Views on the draft problems identified by LGC work

### Integration/alignment

- Lack of integration between economic development and transport in the Wairarapa
  - Cost of freight transport in Wairarapa means it is not competitive against other regions, therefore limiting growth and economic development opportunities
  - Access to the last couple of miles into forest production areas needs to be funded in a fair and equitable way ie funding needs to take account of private benefits (producers and freight operators) but also regional economic development /competitiveness
  - Integration between CentrePort requirements and roading infrastructure needed – CentrePort looking at bringing in larger ships so larger loads would need to be transported to the port. This is difficult given issues with use of high productivity trucks from Wairarapa (due to roading issues – see comment below under “Other problems”)
  - Need for more joined up thinking between production and transport in the Wairarapa eg development of irrigation will increase production and need for increased transportation to market
  - Tourism – lots of visitors use Wairarapa roads but don’t contribute to funding (eg local community can’t afford to maintain the Cape Palliser road but it is important to the local tourism market)
  - Roding bottlenecks (eg bridges, town centres etc) need to be dealt with. Some progress has been made through legislative change but more could be done (eg heavy traffic bypasses, more consideration of bridge capacity/economic lifespan to support economic development)
  - Disjointed decision-making process with NZTA having too much power over investment decisions (both roads and safety decisions ie road straightening etc). Industries need input into priority setting – empower the users (eg primary producers) to input their views/requirements into the process

- In the central North Island councils are willing to contract consultants to assess the roads so freight operators are able to cart 54 tonnes on local roads (making that area more competitive than Wairarapa). Councils in the Wairarapa won't provide permits for freight operators to cart 54 tonnes on local roads (but they are able carry this weight on SH1)
- National-level integration/funding issue - lack of access to rail network/rolling stock has implications for the level of use of roading resources. Questions about whether log trains can have priority over passenger transport, as there are capacity issues getting freight into Wellington city. There is capacity at night, but insufficient spare rolling stock to store products and continue to transport further products
- Integration to improve accessibility
  - Access to public transport for disabled people eg trains work well for people travelling alone, but if travelling as a group on 1-2 spaces available for people with disabilities. Need to create more flexible spaces and increase capacity.
  - Lack of integration between bus services and train eg the number of disabled people on the bus to railway station may not be able to access space on the train.
- Transport planning should be integrated with spatial planning. Need for a cohesive transport plan for the whole region. Would enable a deep analysis of the overall issues in Wellington and the Wairarapa.
- Need for more joined up thinking about route of road transport in the Wairarapa eg Low speed of trucks in Wairarapa (due to route through many towns) has economic cost which is not properly analysed; safety issues with trucks using main town roads (eg crossing many pedestrian crossings - 6 in Masterton alone, trucks passing school buses etc)
- Need to think about Wairarapa transport in the context of the whole Wellington region as lots of Wairarapa residents work in Wellington; suggested rapid road public transport system to train in Featherston more efficient

### **Capacity/capability**

- Staff capability seen to be an issue in smaller councils

### **Other problems**

- Link between economic growth and transport could be stronger
  - Need for Wairarapa roads to cater for high productivity trucks – benefits for competitiveness of Wairarapa economy (ie competing against other regions with better, cheaper access to Wellington port), fewer trucks on the roads have benefits for safety and reducing congestion on the Wellington side of the Rimutakas
  - Issues relating to emerging economic sectors (both farming and forestry) in the Wairarapa – smaller blocks (less than 1,000 h), on less traditional lands, coming up to first harvest. Infrastructure not in place to transport the product out to the market
  - Can be easier to transport products to Palmerston North than Wellington
- Links between transport decisions in the Wairarapa and congestion in Wellington eg ability to cart heavier weights would reduce the number of trucks on the road, improving congestion in Wellington and safety – the freight industry is currently looking to double number of trucks in the Wairarapa, but could shift more with less trucks using heavier loads
- Older population in the Wairarapa – needs to be borne in mind re amount of public transport required in future, also use of mobility scooters on footpaths
- Safety concerns on rural roads
  - with the growing number of trucks travelling into forestry blocks and ideas about bringing in younger drivers to meet increasing demand

- Proposed Western Lake Road cycleway (recreational cycleway linking the Hutt and Wairarapa via the Rimutaka Incline) seen as a “recipe for disaster” given the width of the road
- Delays in decision making (eg Transmission Gully, heavy traffic bypasses in the Wairarapa) lead to lost opportunities eg infill housing means opportunities for bypasses being lost in the Wairarapa.

## **Views on the draft options for change**

### **General**

- The options apply to the south (Wellington) but similar problems exist in Tararua district, and many Wairarapa transportation options use this route (eg milk is transported to the north). Any solutions should consider the relationship with Tararua
- Tairāwhiti Roads solution came about in part because of specialist Central Government funding for the East Coast, to address economic deprivation. Unlikely to have the same financial input in Wairarapa
- “Decent sized” (and presumably funded) council needed to provide adequate roading resources. A larger scale council in the Wairarapa would provide for a stronger voice at the national level, but there is still a need to fix the Wellington regional transport problem, as becomes a problem for Wairarapa businesses/people when they go over the hill to Wellington
- LGC has the ability to create a transport framework that could have influence in NZTA decision-making

### **Option E – Wellington Transport**

- Would like to see more work on Option E as it has potential to enable a more strategic view of transport in the Wairarapa and benefits for economic development on a regional level
- Concern expressed about the disbenefits of centralised transport provision:
  - Potential for loss of local knowledge, but need to consider very local issues (eg often with freight trips the problems are at either end of the journey, footpath condition very important for people with disabilities)
  - Need to think about the weighting of various issues in decision-making eg wouldn’t want to see cycling, public transport etc being given weight in decision-making while rural roads miss out
  - Need to consider how a centralised structure can provide for communities (both local communities and “communities of interest” eg agriculture, forestry, disability)
- Importance of relationships beneath the overarching structure when larger institutions are developed (eg questions about the relationship between Auckland Council and AT)