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Report to the Regional Land Transport Committee
By Dr Dave Watson, Divisional Manager Transport

Progress on Public Transport Aspects of the RLTS

1. Purpose

To keep the Committee informed of progress towards implementing the public transport elements of the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

2. Comment

2.1 The Long Term Financial Strategy (LTFS)

The Regional Council recently adopted a new version of its Long Term Financial Strategy for the years 2000 to 2010. This also includes the 2000/2001 Annual Plan.

Provision has been made in the Long Term Financial Strategy for funding of all the public transport elements of the first five years of the Regional Land Transport Strategy. Funding beyond then is subject to there being an additional source of income, such as road pricing. It is possible that patronage funding being introduced by government may provide much of that increased income. At the moment it is too early to know if this will be sufficient.

The Long Term Financial Strategy assumes that all major public transport infrastructure projects will be funded either by the operators concerned as part of a service contract or by the appropriate local authority through a similar contract for service agreement with the Regional Council.

2.2 **The Projects for 2000/01**

The Regional Land Transport Strategy splits projects into two groups, those before 2004 and those after 2004. The Regional Council's Long Term Financial Strategy has programmed the public transport projects into ten separate years. In the first year the projects to be implemented are:

- Improve bus priority through (Wellington) CBD traffic
- Enhance the bus/rail interchange at Wellington railway station; and
- Improve pedestrian linkages from Wellington station to the CBD

These three projects are from the Ngauranga to Wellington CBD corridor proposals.

The Regional Council in prioritising public transport projects interpreted the Regional Land Transport Strategy as requiring the Wellington City public transport projects to proceed early followed generally by the Western Corridor projects and then the Eastern Corridor.

2.3 **Status of Projects for 2000/01**

Wellington City Council has committed to raising a loan to fund the construction of a new Lambton Bus/Rail Interchange at Wellington station along with associated pedestrian facilities linking this and the station to Wellington CBD. The project has been designed and work begun. The Regional Council is entering into a contract for service agreement with Wellington City Council. This contract for service will in effect pay the City Council for public transport use of the facilities with the contract ceasing after a set period.

A number of bus priority schemes have been identified in Wellington City. They have been included in the City Council's 2000/01 district roading programme. They will attract Transfund New Zealand funding support. The Regional Council will fund the local share so that the schemes can proceed this year.

2.4 **Progress on Projects for Future Years**

Many of the public transport projects programmed for years 2 to 5 are associated with rail on both the Western and Eastern Corridors. Most of these projects are well advanced with planning completed. The ability to implement these projects is dependent on the contractual arrangement between Trans Rail and the Regional Council. Currently the two parties are unable to enter into a long term contract because there is no Transfund New Zealand approved competitive pricing process (CPP) that will allow this to occur.

Transfund's Board has recently adopted procedures for the development of an alternative CPP for rail services. The Regional Council and Transfund New Zealand are attempting to produce such a CPP. It is expected that an alternative CPP will be agreed prior to Christmas. Failure to have a new CPP or to reach a long term contractual agreement with the rail provider will compromise the Regional Council's ability to proceed with the public transport enhancement projects. This would be

disappointing as the outstanding issue is one of process and procedure rather than planning and funding.

3. Recommendation

That the report be received.

Report prepared by:

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