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Committee Regional Land Transport
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Regional Land Transport Strategy Review

Defining the RLTS objectives

1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with definitions of the draft RLTS objectives and have them decide on the need for additional objectives as proposed by Cr. McDavitt at the 1 July 2004 Regional Land Transport Committee (RLTC) workshop.

2. Background

In May 2004 the RLTC adopted in principle the suite of five objectives from the New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS). During the July 1st RLTC workshop, Cr. McDavitt proposed three additional objectives and one amendment, which he believes will give a regional perspective to the RLTS.

Before the RLTC can make an informed decision as to the need for additional objectives, it is important to understand the scope of the current five draft objectives. This paper is a discussion on the definition of the draft objectives and the need for the additions proposed by Cr. McDavitt. Appendix 1 gives a brief definition of each objective and corresponding performance indicators.

Objectives will be pursued simultaneously. Progress in all areas is necessary and desirable for the region.

3. Objectives

3.1 Objective 1: Assist economic development

‘Assisting economic development’ is defined by the NZTS as having a coherent and efficient transport system that contributes to quality of life and to regional and national economic development.

This encompasses promotion of technological advances, integrated land use planning, energy efficiency, and fair and transparent transport costs to users (MoT 2002, p10).

The current RLTS acknowledges the role transportation can play in providing the region with a competitive advantage (WRC 1999, p21). The ‘accessibility and economic development’ objective is defined as optimising access to and within the region, with a focus on tourism, freight movements and relieving congestion, all within the constraints of the Region’s topography.

Cr. McDavitt proposes the particular focus of ‘regional development’ is lacking in both the government and the current RLTS definitions. Regional development more specifically encompasses employment, housing, education and recreational needs. All of which are to be captured and progressed by the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) process.

Amending Objective 1 to read ‘*assists economic and regional development*’ does specify the desire for the RLTS to aid both delivery of national and regional economic prosperity goals, and to foster the housing, employment, education and recreation goals that will arise from the WRS.

3.2 Objective 2: Assist safety and personal security

This objective is about achieving a safer community through the land transport system. The objective is in two parts. Assisting safety aims to improve or achieve regional road casualty targets. Assisting personal security requires transport to contribute to a sense of individual and community security (a feeling of freedom from risk of harm by other individuals) when using the transport system, particularly passenger transport, or when travelling as a pedestrian.

3.3 Objective 3: Improve access and mobility

Fundamentally, transport should provide for the access and mobility needs of our regional community. Improving them is the primary purpose of a RLTS. Access enables social participation and inclusion, while mobility ensures the availability of realistic transport choices for the individual or community, including affordability and equity of cost considerations.

Lack of access can reduce individual or community ability to participate in employment, educational, social or recreational opportunities. While a good amount of access may be provided, it can be downgraded if the system is not functioning efficiently due to for example, congestion delays, including from unpredictable congestion. If network resilience to natural hazard events or traffic incidents is low, the overall level of accessibility on that network is similarly reduced.

The level of choice any individual or community has in accessing these activities is a measure of their mobility. For example, proximity to passenger transport options, taxis, ease of walking or cycling (and proximity of activities), vehicle ownership, and the affordability to the user of all these options.

3.3.1 New Proposals under this objective

- Cr. McDavitt discussed the need for an additional objective entitled '**improve network reliability**'. Significant emphasis has been placed on the need for 'network reliability' in our region - both from road controlling authorities and the public. In order to demonstrate the significance of this issue, yet still associate it with accessibility, it is recommended to integrate the proposal with the existing Objective 3, which would then read '**improve access, mobility and network reliability**'.
- Another proposed objective is '**promote efficiency and affordability**', which includes the concept of '**network efficiency**' as relates to the efficient operation of the network as a whole and making the best use of existing space. Does 'network efficiency' need to be separated from Objective 3 and reconstituted into this more specific proposal?

'Network efficiency', generally captured by 'travel time delay', is assessed and given due importance based on monitoring data. The technical information does not indicate that network efficiency requires a specific objective separate from accessibility and it is perceived as less an issue than network reliability. It is currently a key issue under Objective 3 and will be a significant consideration in policy and strategic option development.

It is recommended that 'network efficiency' is adequately incorporated within Objective 3 and is not an issue significant enough to warrant inclusion in a new objective.

- Cr. McDavitt also proposed the new objective '**encourage social participation**', to better enable community input to transport decision making (already required under the Local Government Act 2002 and Land Transport Act 1998), enable social inclusion and cohesion, and ensure equity in transport choice.

This proposal is however, already captured by the definition of Objective 3. Access enables social participation and inclusion, while mobility ensures the availability of equitable and realistic transport choices for the individual or community.

Cr. McDavitt suggests that accessibility does not cover equity because "access is irrelevant if you cannot use it". This negates the second part of Objective 3, 'mobility' - the individual or community's choice of transport options, taking into account user affordability and ease of access (especially important for those who are mobility impaired).

Reference to the performance measures for each objective (in Appendix 1) highlights the extent of Objective 3 (as amended), and its coverage of Cr. McDavitt's proposals.

3.4 Objective 4: Protect and promote public health

This objective is to provide a transport system that allows for social participation and interaction, and healthy communities via reduced transport impact on natural resources, and increased uptake of active modes.

3.5 Objective 5: Ensure environmental sustainability

Ensuring environmental sustainability within the transport system will require avoiding, remedying or mitigating the negative impacts of transport on the environment, including the encouragement of energy efficiency and the reduction of CO₂ emissions in line with Kyoto Protocol commitments and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. High quality design standards in line with Resource Management Act 1991 requirements will reduce the more immediate negative impacts on land, air, water, communities and ecosystems.

4. Objective 6: Consider economic efficiency and affordability

Cr. McDavitt's proposed objective to '*promote efficiency and affordability*' includes two further concepts not covered in the preceding discussion. They are 1) the economic efficiency of packages, and 2) funding availability for packages (package affordability). The efficiency and affordability of RLTS interventions are undoubtedly desirable outcomes for the RLTS.

Economic efficiency and affordability are currently used as criteria for assessing strategic options and prioritisation. Cr. McDavitt suggests they become an objective and as such, a stated aspiration of the RLTS to guide the development of the Strategy as a whole. Cr. McDavitt's proposal will better enable recognition of the constraints in which the Strategy is to be developed.

It is recommended that a sixth objective be added to read "*consider economic efficiency and affordability*".

5. Conclusion

Developing policy hooks upon which to hang our transport programme is essential and at the core of our review programme. With the draft six objectives, including the amendments made to Objective 1 and Objective 3, and the addition of Objective 6, we will have developed the first layer of 'hooks' in the RLTS framework. Progressing toward a set of policies and strategic options should now be the focus.

6. Communications

There is nothing to communicate.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- (a) *Receive the report*
- (b) *Amend Objective 1 to read 'assists economic and regional development'*

- (c) *Abandon the additional objective 'improve network reliability' and amend Objective 3 to read: 'improve access, mobility and network reliability'*
- (d) *Approve the addition of Objective 6 'consider economic efficiency and affordability'*
- (e) *Abandon the additional objective 'encourage social participation'*

8. References

Wellington Regional Council, (1999). *Regional Land Transport Strategy*. Wellington: WRC

Ministry of Transport, (2002). *New Zealand Transport Strategy*. Wellington: MoT

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