



Report 09.341
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Committee Regional Transport
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Road Safety Advocacy Matters

1. Purpose

This report sets out matters that the Committee may want to raise in submissions to the development process of the national road safety strategy to 2020.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The Committee, at its last meeting on 8 April, received a report on the region's road safety issues. Since that time the Ministry of Transport has released a discussion document titled "Proposals for the 2020 Road Safety Strategy" (refer **Attachment 1**). Officials from the Ministry will provide a briefing the Committee at the meeting on 23 June. The Chair of the Committee has provided comments to the Ministry in a letter dated 30 April 2009 (refer **Attachment 2**). This response highlighted the matters of concern to the Wellington region as highlighted in our study and was generally supportive of the direction and priorities for action over the next ten years proposed in the discussion document.

4. Comment

While the region's network providers (NZTA for State Highways and eight local authorities for local roads) are responsible for the management of their networks and we look forward to road engineering improvements being implemented continuously to address identified risks, this is only one area where road safety improvements can be made. Many effective improvements can only come about through policy direction, legislation and regulation which are the concern of central government. The Committee can have a role in

advocating for changes in these areas primarily through the upcoming Road Safety 2020 submission process.

In response to the request of the Committee at the 8 April meeting, advocacy matters have been identified by a Technical Working Group comprising of officials and officers from central and local government agencies. The matters which the Technical Working Group suggests the Committee advocates a position on are set out in the following paragraphs.

- 4.1 Consideration of incentives to encourage faster take up of new vehicle technologies thereby working to quickly reduce the current average vehicle age from over 12 years. One particular proposal is to reduce the relatively high cost of new vehicles by reducing taxes associated with new vehicle purchases and offsetting this by increased running costs. Such a change could be cost neutral and would provide safety benefits as well as significant reductions in fuel use, CO₂ and other harmful emissions. Also, consideration should be given to encouraging the retirement of older vehicles, possibly by using incentives to encourage scrapping.
- 4.2 Adequate funding and financial support (particularly increased financial assistance rates for local cycling strategies and minor safety works) be provided in future Government Policy Statements to allow Road Controlling Authorities to quickly implement local cycling and safety strategies.
- 4.3 Consideration of restrictions for inexperienced drivers to address the clear risks (exacerbated by speed and alcohol) faced by this sector of the population. Opportunities include:
 - compulsory third party insurance to discourage use of high risk vehicles
 - lapsing of learner and restricted licences to encourage completion of the full licence process
 - introduction of a supervised driving requirement for learner and restricted licence holders to enable development of hazard identification and judgement skills.
- 4.4 Quicker progress in identifying and implementing median and side protection barriers on high speed, high volume roads (mainly state highways) to reduce the severity of incidents which are, for the foreseeable future, inevitable. Consideration should be given to the removal of road side hazards and the needs of cyclists and motorcyclists should also be taken into account when designing such infrastructure.
- 4.5 Adequate funding of enforcement resources aimed at minimising the incidence of the highest risk behaviours and continuing the programme of Police education officers attending schools.

- 4.6 A review of speed limit setting policy and procedures to simplify the process and allow Road Controlling Authorities greater flexibility to respond to local needs.
- 4.7 Consideration of lowering the legal blood alcohol limit from 80mg to 50mg. Regional Public Health and ACC officially support this change. There is a good body of evidence from around the world that clearly demonstrates the positive road safety benefits, both in terms of lives saved and reduced incidence of injury crashes, as a result of this intervention.
- 4.8 The New Zealand Transport Agency be instructed to give further consideration to the matter of road side rest areas to address fatigue crash black spots. A well thought out submission on the proposed Regional Land Transport Programme highlighted this issue and requested that momentum built up in recent years not be lost with the change from Transit New Zealand to NZ Transport Agency.
- 4.9 That the classification of mopeds be reviewed to ensure that riders are required to have appropriate training and skills to allow their safe use on the roads.
- 4.10 That all new motorcyclists be required to undertake compulsory bike handling training as part of rider licensing requirements.
- 4.11 That more attention be given to dealing with repeat offenders including consideration of compulsory confiscation of vehicles in which a serious offence is committed.

The TWG also discussed the merits of legislation to put more onus on drivers to avoid collisions with vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists). The Dutch philosophy is that cyclists are not dangerous; cars and car drivers are, so car drivers should take responsibility for avoiding collisions with cyclists. In Wellington we noted that some two thirds of crashes involving cyclists are attributed to drivers being at fault. However, the TWG was concerned that walkers and cyclists were often observed not obeying road rules and such a change may encourage worse behaviour. Overall there was little support for this idea.

5. Communication

The decisions of the Committee will be forwarded to the Ministry of Transport for consideration in the process to develop a new national Road Safety Strategy to 2020. Once the Committee agrees to support certain advocacy matters, GW officers will take every opportunity to communicate such matters to the government.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.
3. **Instructs** officers to prepare feedback to the Ministry of Transport for the development of the new national Road Safety Strategy to 2020 in line with the following advocacy positions:
 - 3.1 Consideration of incentives to encourage faster take up of new vehicle technologies thereby working to quickly reduce the current average vehicle age from over 12 years. One particular proposal is to reduce the relatively high cost of new vehicles by reducing taxes associated with new vehicle purchases and offsetting this by increased running costs. Such a change could be cost neutral and would provide safety benefits as well as significant reductions in fuel use, CO₂ and other harmful emissions. Also, consideration should be given to encouraging the retirement of older vehicles, possibly by using incentives to encourage scrapping.
 - 3.2 Adequate funding and financial support (particularly increased financial assistance rates for local cycling strategies and minor safety works) be provided in future Government Policy Statements to allow Road Controlling Authorities to quickly implement local cycling and safety strategies.
 - 3.3 Consideration of restrictions for inexperienced drivers to address the clear risks (exacerbated by speed and alcohol) faced by this sector of the population. Opportunities include:
 - compulsory third party insurance to discourage use of high risk vehicles
 - lapsing of learner and restricted licences to encourage completion of the full licence process
 - introduction of a supervised driving requirement to enable development of hazard identification and judgement skills.
 - 3.4 Quicker progress in identifying and implementing median and side protection barriers on high speed, high volume roads (mainly state highways) to reduce the severity of incidents which are, for the foreseeable future, inevitable. Consideration should be given to the removal of road side hazards and the needs of cyclists and motorcyclists should also be taken into account when designing such infrastructure.
 - 3.5 Adequate funding of enforcement resources aimed at minimising the incidence of the highest risk behaviours and continuing the programme of Police education officers attending schools.

- 3.6 *A review of speed limit setting policy and procedures to simplify the process and allow Road Controlling Authorities greater flexibility to respond to local needs.*
- 3.7 *Consideration of lowering the legal blood alcohol limit from 80mg to 50mg. Regional Public Health and ACC officially support this change. There is a good body of evidence from around the world that clearly demonstrates the positive road safety benefits, both in terms of lives saved and reduced incidence of injury crashes, as a result of this intervention.*
- 3.8 *The New Zealand Transport Agency be instructed to give further consideration to the matter of road side rest areas to address fatigue crash black spots. A well thought out submission on the proposed Regional Land Transport Programme highlighted this issue and requested that momentum built up in recent years not be lost with the change from Transit New Zealand to NZ Transport Agency.*
- 3.9 *That the classification of mopeds be reviewed to ensure that riders are required to have appropriate training and skills to allow their safe use on the roads.*
- 3.10 *That all new motorcyclists be required to undertake compulsory bike handling training as part of rider licensing requirements.*
- 3.11 *That more attention be given to dealing with repeat offenders including consideration of compulsory confiscation of vehicles in which a serious offence is committed.*
4. ***Delegates authority to the Chair of the Committee to sign letters related to these positions.***

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Proposals for the 2020 Road Safety Strategy (Ministry of Transport)
Attachment 2: Letter dated 30 April 2009 from the Chair of the Committee to the Ministry of Transport