



17 June 2016

Sandra Preston
Chief Executive Officer
Local Government Commission

Dear Sandra

Spatial Planning for Metropolitan Wellington

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) recognises the importance of spatial planning and supports its inclusion as a priority workstream by the Local Government Commission. We have considered the final report from Boffa Miskell¹, and provide the following response to the options outlined in the report.

Spatial planning is a vital piece of work for the region that has the potential to unlock the economic future of the region and deliver enhanced economic development outcomes over both the short and longer term. The Council is united in supporting spatial planning, and sees it as necessary to support a strong, integrated and prosperous Wellington region.

GWRC considers the development of a regional spatial plan to be a critical tool for achieving a range of strategic objectives for the region. We see multiple benefits arising from spatial planning, including: improved alignment of local government activities and responsibilities, more coherent and coordinated decision-making across the region, improved efficiency, enhanced returns on investment, clearer articulation of regional priorities and the ability to focus resources on these, and more effective support from other key partners and delivery agencies.

Comprehensive Metropolitan Spatial Plan

GWRC reiterates our unequivocal support for the development of a comprehensive metropolitan spatial plan. We are keen to move forward on the two-year timeframe that has always been discussed.

As stated in the report's conclusion, there are a number of options for delivering a comprehensive spatial plan. It is our hope that there is strong support for this option, and that the relevant councils can immediately begin working with the LGA to determine the governance, structure and funding for preparing and implementing the plan.

We support amending the LGA to ensure timely and satisfactory implementation of a spatial plan. Boffa Miskell concludes that the challenges in preparing and implementing a plan on a voluntary basis "appear to impose a formidable and almost insurmountable barrier." In response to this stark warning, GWRC would support LGC approaching the government to request the required legislative amendments.

If there is not sufficient support to pursue the option of a comprehensive spatial plan, GWRC propose a smaller scale piece of work to examine the opportunities and impacts of the

¹ Spatial Planning. Opportunities and Options for Metropolitan Wellington. 6 May 2016

proposed Petone to Grenada Link Road. Such an exercise would involve GWRC, WCC, HCC, PCC and NZTA. A collective response is now an urgent task given the impending consenting phase for this project.

There are significant potential impacts on land use, economic development, and social consequences from the proposed link road that are not well understood. All of the agencies involved need to consider the most appropriate policy settings to respond to these potential impacts. It is incumbent upon us all to ensure the project maximizes the benefits to the region. This sub-regional plan would demonstrate spatial planning in a meaningful and immediately useful manner. It may also convince councils that do not support the comprehensive metropolitan spatial plan option of the value proposition for spatial planning.

Composite Growth Plan

We consider a composite growth plan to be the least desirable of the three options presented, as it reinforces the status quo.

GWRC supports spatial planning for its ability to unlock and progress strategic objectives for the region. A composite plan with removal of duplication, limited trade-offs, and where implementation remained the responsibility of each council, would simply see more of the same.

This option presents an opportunity for more stalling and wasting of council resources in order to continue patch protection and competing growth strategies. A composite plan would not deliver the step-change of a comprehensive spatial plan, or the benefits of an integrated plan.

Stocktake

GWRC consider undertaking a stocktake to be a step along the way to developing a regional spatial plan, which would address questions as to the value proposition of a comprehensive plan, and would be better than doing nothing.

We consider it likely that Boffa Miskell gathered all the relevant documents in delivering their report to LGC, and it would be relatively straight-forward for them to produce the work described. It is also likely to be less resource-intensive and faster to have the same Boffa Miskell staff do this work than to divert Council staff from existing work programmes.

On behalf of the Greater Wellington Regional Council, I look forward to working with the LGC and the territorial authorities to rise to the challenges and realise the benefits of a spatial plan for metropolitan Wellington.

Yours sincerely

Chris Laidlaw

Chair

Greater Wellington Regional Council