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Corporate Plan Output: Transport Policy Advice	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of the current review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS). This document has principally a five-year horizon and must be kept current for a period of not less than three years, that is it needs to be updated every two years.

Its main impact on the City Council presently is that District Rooding Programmes must not be inconsistent with the current RLTS. As the current RLTS is broad in its objectives and focussed at a high level of planning with few targets and specific directions for implementation, it would be difficult for a project to be shown to be inconsistent with the current RLTS.

Indications from central government sources are that there is a desire to have RLTS be more specific than is typically demonstrated by the current Canterbury RLTS. This could have an impact on the development of the City Council's rooding programmes.

While fulfilling legislative requirements the relevance and usefulness of the current Canterbury RLTS has been questioned. The principal reasons for this include:

- The differing levels of institutional buy-in to the vision and objectives;
- A perception that the RLTS lacks teeth and is only marginally relevant to the needs of stakeholders; and
- The absence of clear targets or performance indicators.

To address these shortcomings, the review of the RLTS will be more than a simple updating.

The City Council transport planning staff have programmed work on the production of a long-term transport strategy for the city over the coming year. Such a strategy would have very large overlaps with the likely final result of the RLTS review, particularly the urban portions. City Council staff have a desire to have significant input to the new RLTS (that could be much more directive and impactful on Council activities than previously). Recent discussions with Regional Council staff have resulted in agreeing a process in which City Council staff will take a lead in the creation of the urban portion of the RLTS, whilst Regional Council staff concentrate upon the rural portions of the region.

If the RLTS is to have any teeth, it will need to be supported by robust analysis. The City Council is in the best position to undertake or guide this work.

The review of the RLTS has been initiated, with staff from the Regional and City Council beginning data collection and initial analysis. A report reviewing issues, current trends and giving a précis of our legislative and operational environment is nearing completion. The intended process for undertaking the review is attached. It is anticipated that a reviewed RLTS will be presented to the Regional Council for adoption in October 1999.

To complete the review to the level anticipated is an enormous task. There is a considerable amount of data collation, analysis and consultation with the community to produce a detailed, agreed and final RLTS. Consequently, it may be that to complete the task in the fundamental way desired will require the process to be undertaken over two “reviews”, with work carrying through continuously. The outcome of this review may be limited to an agreed vision and objectives without being able to finalise detailed agreements on policies and individual projects or packages.

A significant issue to be addressed in the review is the establishment of a common vision for the development and operation of the transport system in Christchurch and Canterbury over the next 25 years or so. Many existing strategic documents for the transport system give visions that read more as mission statements (how operational decisions are made from year to year) rather than as (visual) representations or descriptions of how the system might look or operate at some future time. A common understanding of the vision amongst stakeholders is critical for integrated development toward a common future.

The RLTS has also suffered from this difficulty, having a five year time horizon, requiring review every two-three years and being an implementation tool, but having no identifiable long term goal to which it is working. A significant part of this review is to seek to identify this vision. Whilst the RLTS will still have a “short-term” horizon, establishing a longer term vision will give it a direction to move towards, without necessarily having worked out every step of the journey.

Independently and earlier this year, Canterbury Dialogues established a Transport Vision Group, a cross-sectoral working party. This Group was charged with the task of developing and promoting a sustainable transportation vision for the region and to facilitate looking at the “big picture”. Staff from both City and Regional Councils have discussed with this Canterbury Dialogues’ group the common objectives of the City Council desire to create a Transport Strategy for the City, the Regional Council’s need to review the RLTS, and the objectives of the Transport Vision Group. Consequently, with some membership modifications made to the Transport Vision Group, it has accepted a role as an advisory group to the RLTS review process.

Inevitably, with many other in-house and external processes and studies underway, this study review will not and can not be a neat and tidy, isolated review. We are not starting with a clean slate, nor do we have complete autonomy as to our decisions (as a Christchurch community). However, with several organisations working together, seeking to work in a common direction and with a commitment to a common vision, the chances of a better and integrated result are significantly increased.

While the Regional Council is the “keeper” of the document, participation and buy-in from the key stakeholders (including the City Council) is critical for its effective implementation. For this to occur the review process must be participatory and inclusive, to ensure the outcomes are relevant and useful to key stakeholders.

The Regional Land Transport Committee (RLTC) is a committee of the Regional Council, required under legislation. The RLTC is primarily charged with preparation (for approval by the Regional Council) of the RLTS. A letter has been sent to the Regional Council regarding the City Council representation on the RLTC, which was limited to one Councillor in the last Council term. A report is being considered by the Regional Council at this month’s meeting that makes recommendations regarding the composition of the RLTC including the level of City Council representation.

Regional Councils are required to prepare and maintain a Regional Land Transport Strategy under the Land Transport Amendment Act 1995. The legislation requires that every RLTS shall:

- (a) Identify the future land transport needs of the region concerned; and
- (b) Identify the most desirable means of responding to such needs in a safe and cost-effective manner, having regard to the effect the transport system is likely to have on the environment; and
- (c) Identify an appropriate role for each land transport mode in the region, including freight traffic, public passenger transport, cycling and pedestrian traffic;
- (d) State the best means of achieving the objectives referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this subsection; and
- (e) Include any regional passenger transport plan (within the meaning of section 47 of the Transport Services Licensing Act 1989) that has been prepared by the regional council that has prepared the strategy.

Nothing in a strategy may be inconsistent with any regional policy statements or plans prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991. A regional strategy must also be not inconsistent with a National Land Transport Strategy, if one exists, which is not the case presently.

**Recommendation:** That the Senior Transport Planner, Stuart Woods, be the Council’s representative on the Regional Land Transport Committee.

(Councillor Close requested that his vote against the Committee's recommendation be recorded.)

Note: This appointment is also referred to in a separate report by the City Manager to the December Council meeting.