



greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Regional Freight Plan

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Regional Freight Plan

Efficient freight transport is a cornerstone of a prosperous region. Freight transport forms an integral part of the logistics supply chain with a high degree of interconnectedness between business and freight transport within the region. As a result, there is a direct relationship between economic growth and freight growth. Given the greater Wellington region's current economic growth trends, we can expect freight volumes to increase by around 50% over the next 10 years. Consequently, a much increased freight traffic demand will need to be accommodated by the region's transport network. The Wellington region's transport network serves several distinct activities:

- Short haul (both origin and destination are in the region).
- Long and medium haul in or out of the region (where either the origin or destination are in the region).
- Long haul through the region – North Island/ South Island through traffic (neither origin or destination are in the region).

Congestion, travel time delays and inefficient connections between key destinations are significant issues for road freight. Heavy vehicle counts have shown a very high degree of interdependence between the commercial and industrial activities undertaken in different areas throughout the region. Particularly significant volumes of goods flow between the Wellington City CBD/CentrePort, Gracefield/Petone and Porirua. From a freight perspective, improvements to the road network should be focused on increasing efficiency between these areas.

Freight access to CentrePort both by road and rail is affected by problems on those networks, which can impact on the volume of freight transported onwards by sea from Wellington's port. Current rail access to the port crosses Waterloo Quay at grade, often causes significant interruption to traffic flows along the Quay. Providing grade separation of the Waterloo Quay rail crossing is proposed to address this issue.

The Gracefield/Seaview area of Lower Hutt contains around 50% of the industrial floor space

in Lower Hutt and Wellington. While much of the Gracefield Spur railway line has been removed in recent years, it is appropriate that the rail corridor itself is protected to ensure its potential for future use is maintained. This is consistent with the WRS aim to improve transport connections between key commercial centres in the region.

Rail freight issues relate primarily to a lack of infrastructure and rolling stock which constrains use of the rail network. There is the potential to significantly increase the viability of medium and long haul rail freight through efficiency improvements and by addressing existing constraints both within and outside of the region.

Within the region the section of railway line between Pukerua Bay and Paekakariki, known as North-South junction, is a key capacity constraint in terms of being both single tracked and having restrictive tunnel sizes. The single track means limited capacity for freight trains, particularly during the peak commuter period on this section of track. Double tracking in due course is needed to address this constraint. The tunnels on this stretch of rail can accommodate 9'6" high containers, however, Toll now uses 10'6" high containers for some domestic freight, particularly dairy freight, and the clearance issue in relation to these tunnels may become a constraint in the foreseeable future (Walbran, 2006).

A key capacity constraint outside the region is the Kai Iwi tunnel, located on the railway line between Marton and New Plymouth. The Kai Iwi tunnel constrains the movement of high cube ISO containers and oversize loads. The ability to move high cube containers on this line would lead to potentially significant increases in freight volumes to CentrePort, thereby contributing to the region's economic growth. ONTRACK advise that they have considered the tunnel constraint issue and have developed plans to re-route the line to avoid the need for a tunnel. Funding constraints have delayed construction of the re-routing to date (Walbran, 2006).

While Wellington International Airport has the infrastructure required to handle significant quantities of air freight, it is generally recognised

that international air freight out of the airport is limited, both in terms of capacity and destination. This is mainly due to the fact that the Boeing 737 aircraft which operate out of Wellington have limited freight capacity and do not accept containerised freight (Walbran, 2006). Consequently, current volumes of freight to and from the airport are relatively small.

Air New Zealand has taken delivery of the first of its new A320 Airbus jets which accept containerised freight and have a slightly larger freight capacity. The new Airbus aircraft will be used to operate some trans Tasman services from Wellington. However, while this change will

improve freight capacity out of Wellington airport it is unlikely to be significant. Looking forward, it will be important to make use of modern aircraft technology as it becomes commercially viable for high value perishable goods. Although these are actions best led by other organisations, the implications of any increase in future freight movements to and from the airport are being considered as part of the Ngauranga to Airport Study.

This Freight Plan was included in the draft RLTS document released for consultation by the RLTC in November 2006, and was adopted alongside the final RLTS 2007 – 2016 in July 2007.

The objectives of the RLTS are:

- Assist economic and regional development
- Assist safety and personal security
- Improve access, mobility and reliability
- Protect and promote public health
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Ensure that the Regional Transport Programme is affordable for the regional community.

The RLTS outcomes of particular relevance to this implementation plan are:

- Improved regional freight efficiency
- Improved inter-regional freight efficiency
- Reduced severe road congestion
- Maintained vehicle travel times between communities and regional destinations
- Improved reliability of the strategic roading network
- Improved land use and transport integration
- Sustainable economic development supported
- Improved transport efficiency.

The RLTS 2016 targets of particular relevance to this implementation plan are:

- Improved road journey times for freight traffic between key destinations
- All infrastructure constraints to rail freight movements are removed
- Average congestion on selected roads will remain below 20 seconds delay per km travelled despite traffic growth
- No decrease in average vehicle journey “speeds” shown in travel time surveys for selected key routes
- Key routes are very rarely affected by closure
- The majority of passenger transport services covered by integrated ticketing
- Reduced vehicle kilometres travelled per GDP
- Reduced roading expenditure per GDP.

Freight Policies

- Support rail freight initiatives where benefits exceed those of road freight.
- Provide an appropriate transport network for freight and commercial needs.
- Protect and develop rail infrastructure, wagons and facilities for freight and forestry links between Masterton and Wellington.
- Support the protection of the rail corridor to Gracefield/Seaview.

Outcomes

- Improved level of service for freight
- Improved freight linkages
- Improved rail and road freight efficiency.

Freight initiatives

Several projects identified in the various corridor plans are likely to have significant freight benefits, as identified in the following table. Refer to the relevant corridor plans for the full details of responsibility, timing, cost and funding for these projects. A number of new initiatives have also been identified which are not covered under existing corridor plans.

The new initiatives for freight are detailed in the following action programme.

Freight priorities	Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan	Western Corridor Plan	Hutt Corridor Plan	Wairarapa Corridor Plan	New initiatives
Upgrade roads between Gracefield and Porirua <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct Grenada – Gracefield Stage 1: SH1 to SH2 Construct Grenada – Gracefield Stage 2: Cross Valley Link Upgrade SH58 		✓	✓		
Upgrade roads between Petone and CentrePort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct Petone – Ngauranga capacity improvements Construct Ngauranga – Aotea capacity improvements Waterloo Quay rail grade separation 	✓		✓		
Upgrade SH1 between Porirua and CentrePort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct Ngauranga – Aotea capacity improvements Waterloo Quay rail grade separation 	✓				
Facilitate rail based transfer of logs to CentrePort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of a log transfer site at Waingawa (Carterton District) Waterloo Quay rail grade separation Advocate for development of log transfer sites at Marton and Wanganui 	✓			✓	✓
Protect short haul rail freight opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the protection of the Gracefield/Seaview rail corridor 					✓
Improve long haul rail freight efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for Pukerua Bay – Paekakariki double tracking Advocate for removal of Kai Iwi tunnel constraint (between Marton and New Plymouth) 		✓			✓

Table 1: Freight initiatives.

Freight Action Programme

Actions	Responsibility	Timing	Cost	Funding	Target	Performance measures
Facilitate rail based transfer of logs to CentrePort Advocate for the Wanganui/Manawatu (Horizons) RLTS to support the development of log transfer sites at Marton and Wanganui	GWRC	Ongoing	Administrative	GWRC	Log transfer sites supported	Advocacy undertaken
Protect short haul rail freight Advocate to ONTRACK and HCC for the protection of the Gracefield/Seaview rail corridor	GWRC	Ongoing	Administrative	GWRC	Rail corridor protected	Advocacy undertaken
Improve long haul rail freight efficiency Advocate to ONTRACK for removal of the Kai Iwi tunnel constraint (between Marton & New Plymouth)	GWRC	Ongoing	Administrative	GWRC	Constraint removed	Advocacy undertaken