

Regional Land Transport Strategy Review 2009

Submission in Response to Horizons Regional Council Issues Paper
dated 20 July

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Context

The PNCET is a charitable trust with a mandate for securing the environmental sustainability of Palmerston North City. We draw our Trust members from the realms of commerce, community and academia. Four specific items in our terms of reference that are in particular relationship to this submission are:

1. To assist in enhancing the natural, physical and cultural features which give the City its character.
2. To promote the retention of natural landscape, land forms and indigenous vegetation.
3. To help maintain and enhance access to the public and private open space within the City.
4. To act as advocate on environmental issues, to appropriate organisation's for the good of the community (ie Regional Council, Central Government, Select Committees, Conservation Boards and commercial organisations).

We have limited our response to the questions identified by the review paper authors, however we recognise there are significant implications for layers detail beneath these key determinants addressed by the four question format.

Question 1 – RLTS Vision Statement

i. Does this vision statement still fit with where you would like to see our transport system in the long-term?

In part. It also needs to ensure an increasing compatibility with environmental sustainability, and adaptation to near and medium-term changes in the energy inputs for the transport sector.

ii. What else should it include or how should it be altered?

Needs to address the triple bottom line. So should read as:

A safe transport system that provides choices and opportunities, and contributes to the Region's environmental sustainability, easy lifestyle, and economic vitality.

iii. How do changes in our Region and in national priorities since 2006 affect this vision?

Since 2006, the imperatives around action for environmental sustainability have become stronger and more urgent. There is a broad recognition (science, industry, intergovernmental agencies, and some notable examples of local and regional governments) that peak oil will arrive prior to 2020 and fundamentally change the landscape around transport form and function. Some local government agencies are responding well and setting in place adaptation and flexibility. As a region, we need to identify leading examples of sustainability growth and adapt from those examples.

Question 2 – RLTS Objectives

i. Are these objectives still relevant?

Yes, but already outdated.

ii. Do they place sufficient emphasis on the transport issues the Region is facing in 2009?

Not as accepted in 2006. They need a high level recognition of the impact of peak oil and environmental sustainability imperatives on the region's energy and transport matrix in the near and medium term.

iii. What needs changing? What else is becoming important?

Environmental Sustainability and ability of the network to function in peak and post peak oil times.

Question 3 – Project Prioritisation

- i. Do you agree these issues are important to the Region?
- ii. Which issues should have the highest priority and why?
- iii. Are we doing enough to address these issues; if not what else should be done?

No Comment at this Point – our view is that if the framework vision and objectives are corrected, the proper rankings of projects will become self evident, and are best left to the professionals in transport networks to address.

Question 4 Land Use and Climate Change

- i. Do you agree that these are important issues for the Region?

The Issues Paper has saved the best for last! Climate change drivers from the transport sector, and the linked issue of peak oil are of vital importance. They can be addressed through better outcomes from integrated planning and a mix of education and reduction of emissions via regional government decisions that are adequately cognizant of the scale and urgency of the challenge.

- ii. Are there other transport issues which should have greater prominence in the revised strategy?

A rapid resolution of the disparate geography and low connectivity of transport modes in the Palmerston North City network needs to be addressed. We note there is language to this effect in the 2006 plan, yet we remain with a city with disparately located rail, intra-city bus, inter-city bus, and air networks; and no option for carrying bicycles on the key piece of that link – the intra-city and regional (e.g. Feilding – Palmerston North bus network). As well, all termini are sub-standard in terms of their contribution to the vision. Vital towns and cities have public transport nodes that show a level of care, value and appreciation that is sadly lacking in our local networks.

As the RLTS sets the tone and goals for local and regional transport, it is essential that the revised RLTS more strongly address the points identified in this submission, so as to better ensure the vitality, livability and sustainability of the region and her primary population centre.

ENDS