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Greater Wellington Regional Council
Consultation for Annual Plan 2016/17
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Re: GWRC Annual Plan 2016-17

This submission is from the Architectural Centre, an incorporated society dating from 1946, which represents both professionals and non-professionals interested in the promotion of good design.

The Architectural Centre largely supports the GWRC annual plan, but we have the following comments to make, primarily on transport, given its significance for the shape and form of the city and our built environment, as well as its potential to minimise carbon emissions:

Transport: CBD

1. The Architectural Centre strongly supports increasing the mode share of active and sustainable transport (specifically: trains, ferries, buses, cycling, walking and skateboarding).



Taksim, Istanbul

2. We consequently see potential for the GWRC to work with the WCC to: (i) increase the capacity of the CBD to operate as walkable (e.g. identifying streets to form a car-free network through the CBD (e.g. Taksim, Istanbul)); (ii) reduce carparking in the CBD; and (iii) increase carparking costs in the CBD. We note that Nottingham introduced a workplace parking levy (WPL) to largely fund the local council cost of their LRT which was completed last year.

3. We strongly encourage the Council to implement a free public transport zone within the city, and believe that this would be a game changer. A lot of people who could take the train into town but have to get to work at the Te Aro end of town often end up driving because car parking beside their work is generally cheaper and more convenient than a train plus bus combination. Free PT transport in the inner city could reduce car use and parking.

Electric Dreams

4. We do not support the GRWC buying diesel hybrid buses; but strongly support upgrading the bus fleet to fully electric buses; with electric trolley buses replaced when they retire.
5. We support council investigations into fast charging stations for electric vehicles, but consider that this needs to be part of a package aimed at reducing car use and car ownership, and investigating ways to reduce school traffic. While private electric cars will address some carbon emissions, they do not reduce embodied energy, and will not discourage traffic congestion. We recommend that any electric-charging infrastructure policy includes a priority system gives electric scooters, motorbikes and taxis priority over private cars.

Public Transport



Sultanahmet, Istanbul

6. We do not consider BRT to be the best system for a growing city which states it is aiming to increase PT use.



Nottingham Tramlink

7. Instead we encourage the GWRC to work with WCC and NZTA to develop ways to fund a LRT system to enable real choice about future transport options.

We note the increasing implementation of LRT systems around the world in similar sized cities (e.g. Parramatta, Sydney,¹ population: 190,495 (2016)² c.f. Wellington population 203,933 (2016)³).



Artist impression of Parramatta light rail

8. Light rail is the most urban design sensitive of all mass public transport systems. It enables integration with other transport modes, and can be retro-fitted into dense urban environments without significant demolition because it can use existing road space.



Sofia, Bulgaria

9. We also note that England's LRT system continues to experience increased growth, with a 5.6% increase in passenger journeys in 2014-15.⁴ That in England 12% of LRT journeys are concessionary (c.f. 34% for buses), and overall journey satisfaction across all systems in 2014 for LRT was 90%.⁵
10. The recently built Besançon light rail (September 2014) has been heralded as an example of how smaller cities can build light rail for less than in the past.

¹ Transport for NSW "Parramatta Light Rail" <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/parramatta-light-rail>

² Forecast.id "Population Forecasts [Parramatta]" <http://forecast.id.com.au/parramatta/home>

³ Forecast.id "Population Forecasts [Wellington]" <http://profile.idnz.co.nz/wellington/>

⁴ Department for Transport "Light Rail and Tram Statistics: England 2014/15" p. 1. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/433286/light-rail-and-tram-statistics-2014-15.pdf

⁵ Department for Transport "Light Rail and Tram Statistics: England 2014/15" p. 4. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/433286/light-rail-and-tram-statistics-2014-15.pdf

The 14.5km, 31 station Besançon network cost €17.5m/km (€254m) c.f. the 14.3km 29 station Tours network cost of €30.3m/km (€433m).

11. We note that public transport is a significant cost of our rates. We also observe that Nottingham's TramLink extension (opened August 2015), which was estimated in 2013 to cost 570m (the 34% local council funding primarily coming from a workplace parking levy (WPL)), but result in 10,000 jobs and 300m in economic benefits. We encourage the council to outline the economic benefit of its spending in addition to listing costs.
12. We appreciate that the idea of a national integrated ticketing system for Public Transport has delayed local implementation. We strongly encourage the council to lobby hard with the WCC, and keep the pressure on to resolve this soon, as aspects of integrated ticket has the potential to increase PT use. Meanwhile we ask that the Snapper system be programme to enable 90 minute transfers and a maximum daily charge. We understand that, as this is not an infrastructure issue, there is no need to delay implementing these measures.
13. We strongly support more dedicated lanes, and priority for Public Transport.
14. We support not increasing PT fares.

Other

15. We encourage the council to fund research into Traffic Demand Management, including city-specific behavioural change.
16. We recommend that the council work with the WCC to transport model walking, cycling, e-biking, motorbikes, taxis, and all modes of school traffic, in order to inform transport planning for each of these modes.
17. We consider that decreased car ownership will be important if the Council wants to make significant shifts in mode share and consider that there is potential for car share schemes, taxis and hire cars to facilitate this.
18. We support meaningful community engagement on transport matters and appreciate the signalled intentions regarding this with respect to the wider investigation of new city-wide transport solutions as part of the Ngauranga to Airport corridor, and look forward to productive input into this process.
19. We congratulate the Council on achieving the seaward option for the new walking and cycling path between Ngauranga and Petone.

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the GWRC Annual Plan 2016-17 consultation. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



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