

Monday 18 April 2016

OraTaiao submission to Greater Wellington Regional Council's draft Annual Plan 2016/2017

A: Summary

OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council is submitting in response to the Greater Wellington Regional Council's draft Annual Plan 2016/2017, available at <http://www.gw.govt.nz/shape-your-region/>. This submission starts by summarising our main recommendations, introduces OraTaiao, and then gives more detail on our recommendations.

We would like the opportunity to speak to our submission (mainly on topic 3), thank you.

Our seven main recommendations are:

1. Use our finite rates resource for **fast infrastructure investment** for our zero emissions future – before adaptation costs accelerate over this decade.
2. Quickly put in place the **three essential components** of our region's zero emissions transport:
 - i. **safe walking and cycling** for most journeys under 2km (and preferably longer)
 - ii. **frequent, reliable and affordable public transport** for longer journeys and for people with physical disabilities or with young dependents
 - iii. a **widespread car share vehicle network** – to help grow both active and public transport
3. **Investigate light rail as the step change** to deliver zero emissions transport at sufficient scale
4. **Electrify GWRC's vehicle fleet with fleet cars available for hourly public hire**, accelerating car share growth to the hundreds of vehicles we need.
5. Seize opportunities such as 'Let's Get Wellington Moving' (better named '**Fair Affordable Access**') and **encourage cross-sectoral policies and funding** that increase accessibility of jobs, study, recreation, goods and services, whilst increasing the region's population health and resilience.
6. **Research (and action) into transport/access barriers for our region's most vulnerable urban households** – so zero emissions policies increase fairness.
7. **Avoid being locked into increasing costs** of maintaining road access to Wellington's low-lying Lyall Bay airport, and dramatic increases in climate-damaging aviation emissions.

B: Who we are

OraTaiao: The New Zealand Climate and Health Council (OraTaiao, The Council) is an incorporated society of over 420 health professional members calling for urgent and fair climate action – with real health gains now and for our future. We know that climate changes fundamentally threaten human health and wellbeing – and that well-designed climate action can mean greater health and fairness in both the short and longer term. Within its membership, OraTaiao has some of the world's leading climate-health experts, and is consolidating linkages with health bodies and other climate-health organisations in New Zealand and internationally. See more at the OraTaiao website, www.orataiao.org.nz.

C: Our recommendations in more detail:

1. Proposed 'Rates increase for 2016/17'

OraTaiao's comments here are limited to observing, as previously, that rates will be increasingly absorbed by growing climate adaptation costs, so extensive early investment in mitigation, especially by zero emissions infrastructure, is critical. Climate changes and the necessary and inevitable global climate response are also likely to affect the region's rating base.

2. Proposed 'Cost Changes'

OraTaiao urges GWRC to carefully consider the public transport direction of the proposed extra \$360,000 to support the planned Wellington City bus network. Light rail looks increasingly likely to be the step change that will deliver the scale of zero emissions transport needed – rather than 'Bus Rapid Transit' which is simply incremental change built around uncertain roading projects.

3. Proposed 'Additional Activities'

Zero Emissions Transport

3.1 After the positive international climate agreement towards zero emissions reached in Paris just months ago, **our region now has a clear 100% electric transport imperative**. Every transport purchase from now on must be electric – or enable more active travel which is even better for our region's population, economic and climate health¹.

3.2 The **three essential components** of our region's zero emissions transport are:

- iv. **safe walking and cycling** for most journeys under 2km (and preferably longer)
- v. **frequent, reliable and affordable public transport**² for longer journeys and for people with physical disabilities or with young dependents

¹ Active transport is essentially zero greenhouse gas emissions transport, plus pollution-free. Less space is required for cycling/walking than vehicular travel & car parking, and there is much lower maintenance from much less wear & tear. Health research findings include: (i) Benefit-cost ratio estimate of \$20+ from every \$1 spent on Auckland cycling infrastructure, (ii) Healthcare costs of conditions caused by physical inactivity estimated at 1-2.6% of total health care costs, and (iii) NZ College of Public Health Medicines cites 1 in 8 deaths being attributable to physical inactivity. (NZCPHM Physical activity and health Policy Statement, 2014, http://www.nzcpm.org.nz/media/81766/2014_11_28_physical_activity_and_health_policy_statement.pdf)

² Public transport benefits are many: (i) although not as dramatic as the gains with active transport, public transport still leads to greater daily physical activity and thus increases productivity, (ii) ease of access is attractive for employment and tourism, (iii) public transport passengers are often able to multi-task – so travel time can become work or study time, or relaxation, (iv)

- vi. a **widespread car share vehicle network** – to help grow both active and public transport

3.3 We must also reduce the volume of privately owned vehicles (as a less efficient travel mode) and rapidly transform these vehicles to electric.

Electric Vehicle Fleet and Car Share Acceleration

3.3 OraTaiao **strongly supports GWRC's electric vehicle fleet initiative**. This is crucial in enabling second-hand electric vehicles to be more readily available for residents in the Wellington region – and helps create a 'norm' of electric fleet vehicles for both local and central government. We encourage GWRC to work closely with the region's territorial authorities for economies of scale in the purchase of electric cars and provision of electric charging (perhaps new power generation too).

3.4 If congestion charges are considered a 'stick' to keep the region moving freely (including creating space for safe cycling), then **car share cars are the 'carrots' that each remove 15-20 privately owned cars from our roads, yet keep the convenience of car use**. Car share is the essential support for better active and public transport – with real health gains and savings for everyone. Car share schemes can: tip people in direction of more active and public transport, with the safety net of private car access when needed; clear road space for safe cycle paths, designated fast bus lanes and better footpath access; and may help save household budgets from first or subsequent car ownership^{3,4,5}.

3.5 Car share is expanding in our region, with Mevo's all-electric partnership with Audi, and the new peer-to-peer initiative YourDrive that enables this region's residents to hire cars from each other. These complement NZ's first car share company CityHop, which has three cars in Wellington's CBD.

3.6 **GWRC has an exciting opportunity to accelerate car share** from half-a-dozen shared vehicles to the hundreds of car share vehicles (taxi fleet scale) we urgently need for congestion-protection. By GWRC and territorial authorities⁶ making their electric fleet vehicles available to the public to hire, we can quickly scale up and catch up internationally⁷. This saves both rates and taxes – and frees up household finances to choose the best mode for each journey. The number of car share vehicles we need for this region can be calculated by current excess private vehicles plus predicted expansion from current motorway projects and population growth.

Regional Transport Opportunities - and Threats

3.7 The new 'Let's Get Welly Moving' consultation launch is an important opportunity to reconsider all electric public transport between Ngauranga and our regional hospital and airport:

- i. **'Fair Affordable Access'** (to jobs, study, recreation, goods and services) must be the real outcome – not 'Let's Get Welly Moving'. This means that movement/transport is understood as just one way of enabling access⁸ – and means emerging virtual access, land use planning and access for residents who are disabled and/or from low socioeconomic households are also considered. Thinking in terms of access, rather than mobility, reduces the extent of journeys⁹ and includes more residents.
- ii. The clear zero emissions global pathway from Paris¹⁰ and NZTA's abandoned high emissions Basin Flyover proposal, means we must revisit the flawed Public Transport Spine Study¹¹. OraTaiao urges GWRC to **investigate the potential of light rail** to deliver electric public transport capacity needed from our railway station to regional hospital.
- iii. Our region clearly cannot afford to waste ratepayer money on purchasing diesel buses, which, on both health and climate criteria¹², are already obsolete. **Our region's bus fleet must be all-electric**. We would like to see GWRC investigate the potential for electric bus battery recharging by up-cycling the existing trolley bus network. There is no climate or health sense in replacing Wellington's trolley buses with diesel vehicles.
- iv. OraTaiao would like to see fairer, smarter, more resilient transport/access planning include:
 - substantially reduced 2+ zone fares for residents with community service cards and those under 25 years, plus free travel for children – so public transport rapidly is the 'norm' for all
 - research into transport/access barriers for our region's most vulnerable urban households – so zero emissions policies increase fairer access
 - greater information technology use to better connect services and customers within local areas, plus encourage more carpooling
 - increasing existing transport infrastructure resilience (in the face of rising sea levels and more extreme weather events more often) both structurally and with business resilience plans for all major employers (working from home, carpool arrangements ready to go)

3.8 As better access (including transport planning) also leads to better population health, reduced socioeconomic inequity and greater resilience, there may be opportunities to work more closely with other agencies such as the region's DHBs. Cross-sector approaches have the potential to reduce costs for rates and taxes.

social interaction & community connections substantially increase with public aka shared transport – including capacity to connect virtually with friends & family whilst travelling, (v) increased access for younger & older residents unable to drive and/or afford private cars (where the proportion of older people is growing, and drivers' license acquisition amongst younger people is decreasing). All-electric public transport means potentially zero emissions if the necessary increased electricity supply is from renewable sources, not fossil fuels.

³ Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Science. Car-Sharing: where and how it succeeds. TCRP Report 108, 2005.

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_108.pdf

⁴ International Association of Public Transport (UITP) European Moses project, 2005. <http://www.managenergy.net/download/nr126.pdf>

⁵ UITP Bremen Paper 2002 (guidelines for synergies between public transport and car-sharing) <http://www.communauto.com/images/BremenPAPER.pdf>

⁶ Overseas research (TCRP-NAS, UITP – see previous three footnotes) indicates that car share has relied on partnership (either with local authorities or public transport operators) to get sufficient scale for the spiral of success – more cars means more visibility, which means more members and thus more cars, which in turn creates more confidence that a car will be available when wanted and leads to more members.

⁷ A 2009 catalogue showed carsharing services being available in over a thousand cities in many nations (<http://ecoplan.org/carshare/general/cities.htm#latest>); numbers are expected to be much higher now, where as of December 2012 there were an estimated 1.7 million car-sharing members in 27 countries (including so-called peer-to-peer services) (<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/26/business/car-sharing-services-grow-and-expand-options.html?ref=technology&r=1>).

⁸ Access to jobs, education, recreation, goods and services – increasingly includes virtual access (rather than real-time journeys, especially for younger New Zealanders), and includes land use planning that recognises the importance of reducing distances between homes, jobs, study centres, shops and recreation, and multiple uses of space.

⁹ 'Private transport needs to be shaped by the three Rs of travel demand management – Removing unnecessary trips, Reducing trip lengths and Replacing car trips. For people to reduce their (private) car use, alternative modes of transport are needed that are convenient, reliable and attractive.'

NZ College of Public Health Medicine (NZCPHM). NZCPHM Transport Policy Statement. Wellington: NZCPHM, 2013.

http://www.nzcpmh.org.nz/media/64538/2013_08_02_transport_policy_statement.pdf

¹⁰ NZ is one of the world's highest per capita emitters with 40% of NZ emissions from transport, which is also NZ's fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions. With pine forest harvesting scheduled in 2020s, NZ is highly financially exposed.

¹¹ The Public Transport Spine Study (PTSS) treated active and public transport as add-ons to planned roading projects, rather than the essential spine of our region's transport.

¹² GWRC's Climate Strategy requires all projects and proposals to be assessed in terms of climate impacts.

3.9 Wellington Airport's proposed runway extension (and Wellington City Council's funding of the Environment Court resource consent process) threatens to overwhelm the region's steps to reduce climate-damaging emissions¹³. Unfortunately, the Environment Court is unlikely to consider the climate impacts of the airport extension because these are excluded by the Resource Management Act. As well as leading regional climate protection, GWRC has a direct interest in the cost implications of keeping access roads open to the Lyall Bay airport. NIWA modelling for the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's report on sea level rises, released late last year¹⁴, suggests access roads such as Cobham Drive may be at risk within decades¹⁵.

4. Delayed Activities

4.1 Although delay appears to create savings, these may be offset by greater costs – such as a delayed Regional Wellington Spatial Plan that results in increased travel costs and more new infrastructure exposed to flooding and sea level rises.

4.2 OraTaiao would like to see pre-paid travel cards that work for all our buses and trains (and future light rail). GWRC may be better to continue with regional integration, if there is any risk that the region will have to compromise with a less functional national system.

Finally, this submission links with the New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine's Transport Policy Statement and its Transport Learning Resources, which provide source evidence. Please refer to these at:

http://www.nzcpmh.org.nz/media/65906/2013_10_01_transport_learning_resources.pdf
and http://www.nzcpmh.org.nz/media/64538/2013_08_02_transport_policy_statement.pdf.

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Thank you for this opportunity for OraTaiao to make our written submission to the Greater Wellington Regional Council's consultation on the draft Annual Plan 2016/2017.

Yours sincerely

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¹³ GWRC currently excludes international aviation and shipping emissions from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory. These emissions have also been excluded from international climate agreements. However, as international travel and freight create very high climate-damaging emissions (especially by the world's wealthiest), global scrutiny is likely to grow.

¹⁴ Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. Preparing New Zealand for rising seas: Certainty and Uncertainty. Wellington: PCE, 2015.

<http://www.pce.parliament.nz/publications/preparing-new-zealand-for-rising-seas-certainty-and-uncertainty>

¹⁵ NIWA maps (for PCE, 2015) for sea level rise risks for Wellington at <http://www.pce.parliament.nz/media/1375/regional-land-elevation-maps-wellington.pdf>