

**Environmental Reference Group Meeting
17 November 2005
Minutes**

Present:

Councillor Wade-Brown (Chair)
Ralph Chapman
Mike Ennis
Jennie Francke
Chris Horne
David Kettell
Ian Shearer
Charity Stuart
Jim Ebenhoh (WCC Strategic Advisor)

Apologies:

Victor Anderlini
Debbie Firestone
Rex Gillman
Andy Hollings
Ian Hunter
Tushara Kodikara
Ruth Paul
Geoff Skene
Jack Morris (WCC Treaty Relations)
Mike Oates (WCC Parks and Gardens)

Draft Strategies

Jim explained that this meeting was a chance for ERG members to hear from Council officers on the six draft strategies besides the Environmental Strategy, and to provide their feedback on the outcomes, priorities, and implementation ideas.

Councillor Wade-Brown said that ERG members are welcome to provide wording suggestions before the drafts go out for public comment as part of the Annual Plan / Long Term Council Community Plan in early 2006. She pointed out, however, that the draft outcomes and priorities had been approved by Councillors and were not likely to change significantly until after the public comment period. She reminded members that they could put in formal public submissions as part of the Annual Plan / LTCCP consultation in April-May 2006.

Each of the strategies was discussed in turn, and the following comments were offered:

Urban Development

- Outcome 11 should say “suburban centres” not just “centres.”
- There is tension between heritage and intensification.
- The Northern Gateway area is important.
- The strategy is excellent—a relief to hear. It integrates well with Environmental Strategy.
- Introduction and context sections need to make reference to carbon emissions and energy, as well as the links to Transport Strategy.
- The “solution” section should say “compact” somewhere.
- The infill section sounds too negative—talk about the benefits as well (e.g. in “preconditions”).
- Outcome 1 should mention a social mix—don’t push the poor out.
- Outcome 7 needs to say “cycle-friendly” in the outcome statement; it says that in the explanatory text.

- The growth spine makes sense, but it goes through places where people try to relax; will the huge transport artery prevent people from going to café's etc?
- Look to Europe to see how they've mastered the population density issue.
- Focus on open spaces in densely populated areas—the need for inner-city quiet.
- Prepare the city for “peak oil”—state this clearly.
- For both Urban Development and Transport Strategies, state commitment to Kyoto Protocol.

Transport

- We can't build our way out of congestion—that just moves it somewhere else.
- Light rail has been cited as having potential since 1992 and should continue to be explored.
- It is important to get freight off roads and onto rail/water.
- Paragraph two of the intro is good, but paragraph four is not.
- Mention the Quality Partnership Agreement (QPA) with Stagecoach and GWRC.
- In-lane bus stops are good.
- Some on-street parking is needed if there is no off-street parking, so green lanes for buses are OK only if off-street parking is easy.
- Is freight really the future of Wellington? Why not shift the freight system elsewhere, like Seaview?
- The Northern Corridor should be thought of in the context of the whole growth spine.

Economic Development

- Should have an outcome related to “More Sustainable”.
- Commit to compliance with 1992's “Agenda 21” on sustainability.
- Recognise that there are environmental constraints on growth.
- GDP is a bad measure for the WRS. GPI (Genuine Progress Indicator) is better.
- Opportunities for sustainable economic development need to be fostered (e.g. reusable nappies)
- The importance of Quality of Life to economic development is substantial.

Social, Cultural Wellbeing, and Governance

- Monitoring is important.
- Is Council really the service provider in all cases? In many places Council is more of a facilitator.
- Does it really matter if we wait another year to do certain things? On the other hand, some people want to get on and do it.

Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet again in February 2006.

Note: the date has since been set as Monday, 20 February, from 5:30-7:30 in Committee Room One at WCC.