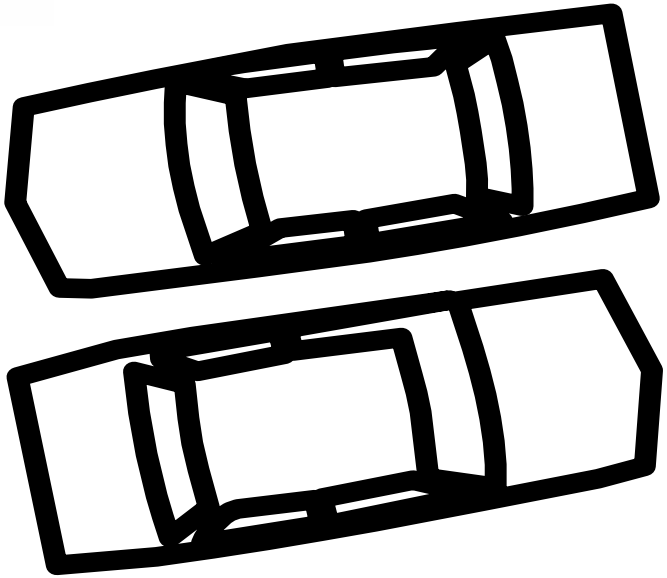
TRANSPORT and INFRASTRUCTURE



7.0 INTRODUCTION

Efficient transport, communications and energy distribution networks and services for goods and people are important in the Gisborne District which is geographically large with a dispersed rural population. The urban centres including Gisborne City are also located remotely from the major North Island centres. The transportation of goods and livestock into, out of, and around the district is vital for the economic well-being of the district's population. A reasonable level of personal mobility is important to most of the district's population.

The Resource Management Act allows district and regional plans and policy statements to enable people and communities to provide for their economic, cultural and social well being (that is part of the definition of sustainable management). The Act is not about promoting one set of economic instruments over another, but rather appears to anticipate planning documents establishing an environment conducive to achieving desired (sustainable) ends. For this reason this chapter of the RPS does not promote one set of transport or network infrastructure options over another, but rather recognises the value of an efficient transport and network infrastructure as a whole.

The cost of providing networks and services needs to be taken into account. This is especially important for remote areas which may require relatively expensive transport facilities for few users.

Transportation includes rail, air, road and sea based facilities and services, both public and private, and issues that are associated with them.

Rail Transport Service

The Gisborne area is served by the East Coast Main Trunk line which links Gisborne to the main trunk system at Palmerston North. A branch line also services the industrial area. Although regular freight services operate, passenger services are no longer available.

Periodically the closure of the line is suggested, but has so far not occurred. The maintenance of the line is desirable because:

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It provides some choice for industries requiring the transport of a variety of goods, and competition with road transport operations.

It enables less stress on the roading network which would need to be improved to cater for extra heavy traffic if the rail link were discontinued.

The maintenance of railways infrastructure allows future options for rail transport to remain open.

Rail transport may be able to be used for the transportation of logs associated with the Wharerata and other forests, and could assist to ease congestion at the Port and heavy road traffic through Gisborne City.

In 1993 rail freight from Gisborne comprised 24% general goods and 23% fruit and vegetables, and in total approximately 4,000 tonnes of goods per week a freighted by rail from the district. The rail operation is privately owned and the Council, therefore, has no direct influence over the maintenance of the link.

Sea Transport - Maintenance and Development of Viable Port Service

The Gisborne Port is currently serviced by Port Gisborne Ltd, with other coastal port services having been discontinued. There is some possibility that a port could be redeveloped, possibly at Hicks Bay, in association with future harvesting of the east coast forests.

The use of port facilities is a significant transport issue because:

They provide a link within the district for the export of bulk products to other parts of New Zealand and overseas.

Products can be imported directly into the region without incurring the transport costs associated with transporting them overland from other centres.

The roading system does not have to cater for heavy vehicle movements in and out of the region which would otherwise be necessary.

Air Transport: Preservation Of The Operational Environment For Air Transport

Air transport to and from the Gisborne District is primarily conducted through the Darton Field Airport on the outskirts of Gisborne City. Regular services are available for passengers and goods to other centres within the country. The airport is also the base for aerial top-dressing services.

Approximately 72000 passengers used air services in and out of Gisborne in 1992, with approximately 8000 aircraft movements.

The continuation of these air services is important for the economic and social well-being of the District. There are no regionally significant adverse effects caused by air transport. Because airports have demanding safety requirements measures are needed to protect the operational environment of the airport from adjacent developments.

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Roading: Provision of Roads for Remote Areas

Gisborne District covers a large geographical area and has a relatively small population. Significant roading expenditure is required to service a small number of people living in remote areas. Although the population may be sparse, the value of goods transported over rural roads may be high enough to the well-being of the district's economy to justify continued Council roading expenditure. The anticipated growth in the forest industry in remote locations will place further demands on rural roading especially as forests begin to be harvested and logs are transported to processing facilities or ports.

Urban Roading: Environmental Impacts of Heavy Traffic, Central Area Congestion and Amenity, Road Safety, Cycling

Urban roads cater for a wide variety of road users, many of whom have competing needs. A number of environmental and safety issues are raised. As there is only one urban centre in the region these matters are not generally considered to be of regional resource management significance and so are not addressed further in this statement. Transport of hazardous substances is however addressed in part 2, 8.7. Urban roading issues will be further addressed by Council in the District Plan and in the Regional Land Transport strategy. Some of the urban roading issues that will be covered include heavy vehicle routes, effects on the amenity value of the central business district of Gisborne City, safety and convenience for cyclists**.**

Telecommunications and Power Distribution

Telecommunications services include telephone, broadcasting and other forms of distributing information. Power Distribution includes electricity and natural gas. These are collectively referred to as network utilities. They are all very important to the economic and social development of the District. Many utilities are in a state of rapid technological change at present which may lead to changes to existing services and the introduction of new ones such as cable television. Such services require facilities on the land including broadcast towers and repeaters, and overhead or underground pipes wires and cables and associated equipment. Potential impacts of such activities include effects on the landscape, and soil erosion associated with construction of networks and associated tracking.

7.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE, SAFE TRANSPORT AND NETWORK UTILITY SYSTEMS CAN RESULT IN ADVERSE EFFECTS ON OTHER COMPONENTS OF HTE ENVIORNMENT SUCH AS COMMUNITY HEALTH AND NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

Explanation

The Resource Management Act includes in its purpose "... the sustainable use of resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety..." (section 5).

There are several important environmental effects associated with transport such as gravel extraction, earthworks, dust, roadside sprays and noise, as well as effects associated with network utilities and these must be addressed in conjunction with their provision in order to achieve the full meaning of sustainable management.

Potential effects of the railway include adverse effects of maintenance such as weed spraying, and earthworks to clear slips or improve the track.

The existence and operation of the Port and any new facility which may be developed have the potential to cause the following adverse effects:

- *degraded water quality;*
- *loss of natural character;*
- *loss or modification of marine habitats due to reclamation, dredging and dumping of dredgings;*
- *Landscape changes.*
- *Significant adverse effects are possible from roading. These include:*
- *Soil erosion, sedimentation of waterways and damage to natural habitats from earthworks and excavations when constructing or maintaining roads;*
- *Emissions from engines causing air pollution and contributing to greenhouse gases;*
- *Wastes from stock trucks causing nuisance or danger to other road users and lowering water quality in the vicinity.*
- *Noise, smell and vibration caused by heavy traffic passing through populated areas.*

Potential effects from network utilities include visual impacts and soil erosion and water sedimentation caused by construction and associated tracking.

7.1.1 Objective

1. The provision by relevant organisations of safe, efficient, and convenient rail, air, port and road transport services in a way that avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the natural and physical environment.
2. The provision of the efficient development, operation and maintenance of network utilities by the relevant organisations throughout the Region in a way that avoids remedies or mitigates adverse effects on the natural and physical environment

7.1.2 Policies

1. To avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects resulting from the construction and maintenance of transport facilities and network utilities.
2. To plan for the location of transport facilities and network utilities and their relationship with adjoining landuses so that they do not cause or sustain adverse effects from nearby landuses
3. To recognise and promote the environmental and economic advantages of efficient rail and sea
4. To encourage efficient and sustainable transport and utility networks in the region.

5. To promote a pattern of urban growth that minimises the use of energy.

6. To be willing to consider new transport options such as barging or new port facilities which might reduce the Region's dependence on roading

7. To encourage efficient and sustainable port developments.

8. Provide, where possible, for the extraction of gravel from environmentally appropriate locations in order to enable the roads of the region to be maintained.

7.1.3 Methods

The Gisborne District Council will:

1. Prepare a Regional Land Transport Strategy in accord with the Transit New Zealand Act to identify future needs and options for meeting them.

2. Include provisions in regional and district plans to provide for road, rail and port activities and network utilities while avoiding remedying or mitigating resulting adverse effects.

3. Include provisions in the District Plan to protect the operational environment for transport services and network utilities by techniques such as roading hierarchies, buffer areas, heavy traffic routes, separation of incompatible activities.

4. Provisions will be made in the District Plan to address the resource management issues of industrial minerals such as rock, gravels and sand.

5. Provisions in the Regional Waste Management Plan to control the effects of effluent discharges from stock trucks.

6. Advocate with the owners for the continuance of the rail link where this is in the economic interests of the inhabitants of Gisborne District.

7. Encourage major industrial activities to locate alongside railways wherever possible.

7.1.4 Reasons for Objectives, Policies and Methods

The economy requires a safe and efficient transport and network utility infrastructure. This includes adequate roads, rail and air services, telecommunication and energy distribution.

Access to transport services is essential. These systems can have adverse effects on the environment, in particular discharges to water, soil and air and noise. Construction, maintenance and use of ports, roads, railways airports and network utilities can result in soil erosion, sedimentation of waters, loss of habitats and scenic qualities, (Objective, Policy 2, Method 2, 4).

The operations of facilities can be affected by incompatible land use adjacent, e.g. traffic congestion, building heights near airports, noise restrictions. While transport and utilities cannot expect total freedom to adversely affect adjacent land, some grouping of related and separation of incompatible activities can be mutually beneficial, (Policy 2, Method 3).

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A Regional Land Transport Strategy is a statutory requirement. It enables the land transport needs to be identified and provided for in a way which must be consistent with the Resource Management Act. (Method 1)

The District and Regional Plans are the statutory means under which transport and network utilities can be managed to enable them to operate and develop in a sustainable way. Within most of the district travel by road is the only transport option and it is therefore critical that adequate road infrastructure be developed and maintained in order to facilitate the economic and social well-being of the district, (Methods 2, 3 and 4.)

The continued operation of a rail link in the district is desirable as it gives greater transport option and maintains the rail infrastructure so that it is available in the future. Rail transport has advantages over road as it reduces fuel use, exhaust emissions and road construction and maintenance. Although the value of the rail link is acknowledged, it is important to recognise that Council has no direct control over its operation, (Policy 3, Method 5).

Port services are an important transport link for the import and export of bulk goods into and out of the district. Efficient port services enhance the economic viability of producing bulk export products locally, and therefore add to the economic well-being of the district generally. Sea transport has advantages over road as it reduces fuel use, exhaust emissions and road construction and maintenance.

Port facilities can have major impacts on the natural and physical environment. The Regional Coastal Plan and District Plan are the statutory documents where such impacts are required to be addressed, (Policy 2, 3).

Port services are an important transport link for the import and export of bulk goods into and out of the district. Efficient port services enhance the economic viability of producing bulk export products locally, and therefore add to the economic well-being of the district generally. Sea transport has advantages over road as it reduces fuel use, exhaust emissions and road construction and maintenance. Port facilities can have major impacts on the natural and physical environment. Sustainable Port development and operation is therefore encouraged.(Policy 7).

Maintenance of roads within the region is dependent in part upon the availability of adequate supplies of suitable quality gravel.

Alternatives considered

Do Nothing
Demand for transport systems is inevitable. To do nothing would result in limited or no ability to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects, and also in transport systems unduly restricted by incompatible adjacent activities.

User pays
User charges to pay for the environmental effects of transport were considered but not adopted because of:

- *the difficulties of accurately valuing environmental effects of transport;*
- *the difficulties and high costs of enforcing and collecting such charges that make this suggestion more relevant at national level where such agencies already exist;*
- *the difficulties in knowing how to spend any resulting revenues on repairing environmental damage;*
- *the overlap with Central Government initiatives already in train, e.g. the consideration of carbon taxes.*

7.1.5 Integrated Management and Network Utilities

Other sections of Part 2 this regional policy statement relevant to transport and network utilities include:

2.1 Soil Erosion

2.6 Areas of significant natural character

2.3 Natural Hazards

3.0 Water Management

5.0 Energy Management

6.0 Coastal Management

8.0 Waste Management and Hazardous substances

7.1.6 Anticipated Environmental Results

1. A safe and effective transport and network utility system which meets the requirements of the people and the economy of Gisborne.
2. Minimal adverse environmental effects associated with transport and network utility facilities.

7.1.7 Monitoring

1. The development of provisions in regional and district plans providing for transport and network utility systems which avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on natural and physical resources.
2. The preparation of a Regional Land Transport Strategy which is consistent with this Statement and the Resource Management Act.