

SUBMISSION ON DRAFT REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLAN 2015-2025 (2018 Review)

TO: HORIZONS REGIONAL COUNCIL

SUBMISSION ON: DRAFT REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLAN 2015-2025 (2018 Review)

NAME: HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND

POSTAL ADDRESS: PO BOX 10 232
WELLINGTON, 6143

Email to: transport@horizons.govt.nz

1. **Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ) submits generally in support Draft Regional Land Transport Plan.**
2. **Background to HortNZ and its involvement with natural resource and environmental management**

HortNZ was established on 1 December 2005, combining the New Zealand Vegetable and Potato Growers' and New Zealand Fruitgrowers' and New Zealand Berryfruit Growers Federations.

The horticulture industry value is \$5.6 billion and is broken down as follows:

Industry value	\$5.6bn
Fruit exports	\$2.81bn
Vegetable exports	\$615m
Total exports	\$3.4bn
Fruit domestic	\$960m
Vegetable domestic	\$1.26bn
Total domestic	\$2.2bn

It should be acknowledged that it is not just the economic benefits associated with horticultural production that are important. The rural economy supports rural communities and rural production defines much of the rural landscape. Food production values provide a platform for long term sustainability of communities, through the provision of food security.

The vision of HortNZ is 'Healthy food for all forever' and the HortNZ mission is 'creating an enduring environment where growers prosper'. HortNZ advocates for growers across the key industry areas of national regulatory reform, regional and district planning, biosecurity, research and development, access to labour, education and readiness and response to adverse events.

HortNZ takes an involvement in local government planning processes on behalf of all 5,500 active growers as part of its national environmental policy. HortNZ manages issues that cover and affect the whole horticulture industry (excluding winegrowers and winemakers). Many of the issues are common between Districts, therefore HortNZ provides input to policy at the national level, as well as regional and district policy processes.

With New Zealand's increasing population, domestic food supply is an issue that HortNZ is concerned about nationally. HortNZ have recently released a report¹ on domestic vegetable production in New Zealand to help educate and inform New Zealanders of this issue. While the ability to transport chilled fruit and vegetables has reduced reliance on locally-grown produce, it also creates risk if distribution channels are unexpectedly altered. For example, a blocked highway following an earthquake or significant rainfall could restrict access between fruit and vegetable hubs and their markets. Therefore, HortNZ consider planning for reliable and efficient transport networks to be a high priority.

3. Horticulture in Manawatu – Wanganui region

There are approximately 202 growing operations in the Manawatu – Wanganui Region with two main hubs of vegetable production in Horowhenua and Ohakune which provide a range of vegetables year round for domestic supply so the areas are critical in the national food supply framework. There is also production for export of onions squash and potatoes.

HortNZ would like the vegetable growing in Ohakune and the Horowhenua in particular to be specifically recognised in this strategy as these regions play an important role in feeding New Zealand and for Wellington supply in particular. A recent report “NZ domestic vegetable production: a growing story” highlights the importance of this region and the pressures of ensuring the ongoing production.²

Census Statistics

The last Agriculture Census was in 2012³ and provides a level of insight into the amount of land in horticultural production (Fruit and Vegetables). While this data⁴ is of interest, it has limitations due the age of the census data (5 years) and the fact that a number of growers requested information they provided to remain confidential. Therefore, this data should not be relied upon to define the full extent of horticulture within the Region. It does however highlight the extensive range of fruits and vegetables grown in the Manawatu-Wanganui Region.

Please note that HortNZ do not represent mushrooms or nuts; however, they have been included in the tables below for completeness.

Figures 1, 2a, 2b and 3 below summarise the 2012 census findings for the Manawatu – Wanganui Region, North Island and New Zealand.

¹ <http://www.hortnz.co.nz/assets/Media-Release-Photos/HortNZ-Report-Final-A4-Single-Pages.pdf>

² <http://hortnz.co.nz/assets/Media-Release-Photos/HortNZ-Report-Final-A4-Single-Pages.pdf>

³ The next agricultural census will be held later this year.

⁴ http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/industry_sectors/agriculture-horticulture-forestry/2012-agricultural-census-tables/horticulture.aspx

Figure 1: Area in indoor vegetables harvested by region and type

Year to 30 June 2012

Region	Capsicum	Cucumber	Cooking herbs	Lettuce/salad greens	Mushrooms (Cased)	Tomatoes (Indoor)	All other vegetables and herbs grown indoors
	Square metres						
Manawatu-Wanganui	263	C	C	C	0	C	3,925
TOTAL North Island	497,607	215,245	62,940	174,095	C	998,773	181,353
TOTAL New Zealand	571,782	268,525	90,390	238,103	151,962	1,180,883	269,331

Source: Statistics New Zealand

Symbol: C confidential

Figure 2a: Area planted in outdoor fruit by region and type

At 30 June 2012

Region	Kiwifruit (green)	Kiwifruit (gold)	Kiwifruit (other)	Total kiwifruit	Wine grapes	Table grapes	Apples	Pears	Pears (Asian)	Peaches	Apricots	Nectarines	Cherries	Plums	Avocados	Feijoas	Tamarillos	Passionfruit
	Hectares																	
Manawatu-Wanganui	118	C	C	C	8	C	34	39	C	11	2	C	C	8	22	11	C	0
TOTAL New Zealand	9,500	3,070	187	12,757	34,562	43	8,845	617	76	452	434	409	619	362	4,149	238	106	31

Source: Statistics New Zealand

Symbol: C confidential

Figure 2b: Area planted in outdoor fruit by region and type

At 30 June 2012

Region	Persimmons	Blackcurrants	Blueberries	Boysenberries	Raspberries	Strawberries	Oranges	Grapefruit/gold fruit	Lemons	Mandarins	Tangelos	Olives	Chestnuts	Hazelnuts	Macadamia	Walnuts	Other fruits
	Hectares																
Manawatu-Wanganui	C	0	7	3	4	16	C	C	5	C	C	43	14	18	C	21	C
TOTAL North Island	153	1	430	39	30	194	695	C	366	C	C	1,132	101	57	191	97	186
TOTAL New Zealand	154	1,408	579	259	132	220	696	32	371	691	67	1,657	142	433	195	574	396

Source: Statistics New Zealand

Symbol: C confidential

Figure 3: Outdoor vegetables harvested by region and type

Year to 30 June 2012

Region	Asparagus	Broccoli	Cabbage	Carrots	Cauliflower	Cooking herbs	Green beans	Kumara	Lettuce	Melon (water/rock)	Onions	Peas (fresh / processed)	Potatoes	Pumpkin	Squash	Sweet corn	Tomatoes (outdoor)	Other
	Hectares																	
Manawatu-Wanganui	173	471	169	429	219	10	4	C	339	C	39	39	1,260	148	241	23	2	312
TOTAL North Island	777	1,548	605	857	617	135	445	C	1,066	245	4,610	2,497	5,442	793	6,588	3,771	662	1,152
TOTAL New Zealand	820	1,977	793	2,047	852	314	6	1,188	1,228	1,250	5,718	6,672	11,578	1,048	6,837	4,664	669	1,781

Source: Statistics New Zealand

Symbol: C confidential

4. Overall comments

HortNZ is generally supportive of the strategy and recognises the importance of good transport links to industry and the community

Growers supply fruit and vegetables to markets across New Zealand and are highly dependent on the transport network, including sea freight and land transport.

Transport must be reliable in order to achieve consistent food quality, supply the market at the right times and obtain equitable returns. While the ability to transport chilled fruit and vegetables improves quality delivered to market, this adds expense.

A reliable and efficient transport network is vital to not just the regional economy, but also the New Zealand economy. Furthermore, fruit and vegetables grown in the Horizons region feeds all New Zealanders and so a resilient and efficient transport network is a vital component of achieving this.

A strategy for transport needs to take into account not only the productive capacity of soils when routes are being planned but also the impact on farmland from runoff and drainage from the roading system which has a direct impact on growers during wet periods particularly in the Horowhenua.

5. Specific comments

The Draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2015 – 2015 (2018 Review) (Draft document) identifies the importance of transport to the region and beyond and sets out the objectives and strategic priorities for the region. The comments below refer to specific sections in the Draft document and propose changes to better reflect the importance and role of horticulture in the Region.

5.1 Section 2.4 Freight and other heavy vehicle operations

Section 2.4 Agriculture (Pg 14) identifies that the region contains 18% of all Class 1 and 14% of all Class 2 soils in NZ. The region also has significant areas of Class 3 soil and other soil of value for high class horticulture production, such as the areas around Foxton where asparagus is grown. The Draft document recognises that there is potential for further growth around the use of these soils. It is noted that the One Plan, including the Regional Policy Statement, and district plans recognise the importance of high class soils for food production.

Given the significance of these soils it is considered that Horticulture should be a specific item under 2.4.

However the importance of these soils to both current and future food production and security do not flow into the policy framework of the Regional Land Transport Plan.

HortNZ also considers that Section 2.4 should be renamed to better reflect the descriptors in the section.

5.2 Section 3: Regional Issues

Section 3.1: Issue 1 'Land use pressures' identifies land use pressures on the transport network but does not identify transport network pressures on land use.

Section 3.3: Issue 3 'Economic development, Tourism and Growth' does not identify the potential for growth in the agriculture or horticulture sector.

Section 3.6: Issue 6 'Environmental' identifies some impacts of transport on the environment but does not identify the loss of high value soils as a result of new roading developments. HortNZ considers that this should be identified as an issue under 'Environmental'.

5.3 Section 4: Objectives

Section 4 sets out five objectives that contribute to the purpose of the Land Transport Management Act to contribute to an effective, efficient and safe land transport system in the public interest with a focus on:

- Networks that provide efficient, reliable access and movement for people and freight
- Maximise the strategic advantage of central NZ
- Safety
- Reliable multi modal system
- A resilient network

HortNZ supports the high level objectives.

5.4 Section 5: Strategic Priorities

Section 5 identifies five strategic priorities that will be the focus of the future work programme to achieve the objectives (benefits) and address the issues (problems):

- Effective and efficient road maintenance and delivery
- Improve connectivity, resilience and safety of strategic routes to and from key destinations linking north-south and east-west while factoring in demographic changes and impacts on land use
- An appropriate network of tourism routes
- An integrated walking and cycling network
- Effective, accessible and affordable multi-modal transport networks

HortNZ generally agrees with the priorities as the enabling the delivery of fresh food products to and from the region.

HortNZ notes that impacts on land use is included as part of Strategic Priority 2 but there are no policies in Section 6 that demonstrate how the outcome will be achieved through guiding and directing decisions to achieve the priorities and objectives.

5.5 Section 6: Policies and Measures to achieve the priorities

Strategic Priority 2 has five policies:

- Maintain and as necessary improve the strategic transport network to ensure safe, efficient intra-and inter-regional accessibility and links with national transport corridors
- Support the provision of effective connections to the Region's principal economic growth and productivity areas
- Support the efficient and effective movement of freight within and through the Region
- To ensure land use planning recognises potential impact on existing transport systems

- Encourage effective integration of transport and land use planning in growth areas of the Region.

While Policy 2.4 has a focus on land use planning it is only in respect of how such planning affects the existing transport system. There is no consideration of the impacts that transport networks, in particular new networks, can have on current land use. Given the strategic priority to consider impacts on land use it is appropriate that consideration of such land use is included in the policy framework.

HortNZ seeks that a new policy is included for Strategic Priority 2: *When developing plans for new roading networks consider the impacts on the current land use, particularly where it will impact on economic development, including in relation to retention of high class land for food production and security.*

Such a policy would be consistent with the Regional Policy Statement and ensure that the impacts on land use are given recognition and considered at the time of development of new proposals.

6. Response to specific questions on submission form

- 6.1 Have we captured the issues you think are facing the land transport sector over the lifetime of the Plan?

Generally, but need to recognise that transport does not exist in isolation to the wider community and economic development.

- 6.2 Do you think the strategic priorities (pg 3) are reflective of what the Region needs to focus its land transport investment on?

Yes, but seek changes to policies for Strategic Priority 2 to better incorporate potential impacts on high class land.

- 6.3 Do you agree with the prioritised list of projects (pg5)? Would you rate some projects higher? Lower?

Recognise the importance of the Wellington Northern Corridor, Otaki to north of Levin but seek recognition that while this will benefit the movement of freight, including fruit and vegetables, it also has the potential to impact on available land for horticulture on high class land.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.



Angela Halliday
**Manger, Natural Resources and Environmental
 Horticulture New Zealand**

Mob: 027 947 3344

Email: angela.halliday@hortnz.co.nz

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