

**Boulter Consulting**  
**urban and transport planning**

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The reason this newsletter is a bit delayed is a good one – progress on my book (see below).

In my late 2016 newsletter, I had mentioned work a colleague, Don Wignall of Transport Futures Ltd, and I had done on passenger rail, and on which we've done a bit more (still ongoing) recently.

The NZ Transport Agency has historically regarded 'public transport' as something within a region, funded through an individual Regional Council.

Rail services in recent years have nudged their way right up to regional boundaries, with prospects of extending further. So in Wellington, from Paraparaumu to Waikanae – why not over the boundary to Shannon and Levin? In Auckland, from Papakura to Pukekohe – why not to Waikato settlements like Pokeno, Mercer, Huntly, and others? Funding region by region is a real stumbling block to establishing inter-regional services, and much of the work by Don Wignall and myself has focused on this (e.g. Palmerston North-Wellington, Hamilton-Auckland, and Wellington-Wairarapa – the last of which has the big advantage, despite being like an inter-regional service, of being entirely within Greater Wellington region, meaning we have only one Regional Council to talk with).

The 'within-region' original logic was congestion benefits for urban road commuters. Completely different benefits are now recognised. The benefits of the Central Auckland Rail Link, for example, mainly derive from bringing larger numbers of people into the centre (more than roads could bring) who then do business and spend money. Whichever parties form the government after the election, the basis of passenger rail funding seems overdue for a re-vamp. Then, with hopefully more inter-regional rail possibilities opened up, you know where to come to justify a proposal.

Preliminary Economic Evaluation Handbook  
– Passenger Rail Services



Prepared for KiwiRail  
Boulter Consulting in association with Transport Futures Ltd



Edition 1

March 2010

The work Don and I did in 2010 for KiwiRail, notably writing their *Preliminary Economic Evaluation Handbook – Passenger Rail Services*, and *New Zealand Passenger Rail – Network Development Economic Case* documents, can be dusted off, updated and used as a starting point for the good economic case which we know exists (and have demonstrated with figures) in many parts of the country for rail commuting (and tourism) beyond regional boundaries. Surely the public would prefer this to sitting in traffic jams on newly-built bigger roads, bringing further congestion into the city in the shape of their own car?

As for the book, I spent some time last month taking on board my reviewer's comments and giving the text a slight re-focus. It makes a broad sweep through the history of both urban planning and classic transport planning, drawing some conclusions on the extent to which transport planning is (or should be) a technical exercise or one of policy choice. A lesson from the 1960s and the 1990s has been that transport planning is centrally about conscious choices between priorities (for example, weight to be given to different forms of transport), which no technical model can do for us, and must involve letting the lay public steer on those choices. Have a look at the 'news' page of my website, where I give a bit of a summary. From late August a paper I'm doing for the Australasian Roadmarkers' Conference in Hamilton, along the same lines, should be on their website [www.nzrf.co.nz](http://www.nzrf.co.nz).

Please do check out (on my website's *writings* page) some articles I've done recently for *Roundabout*, the magazine of the IPENZ Transportation Group. They gave me the 'best contributor' award for these. The articles were on European roundabout design (thinking of cyclists), the Auckland Transport Alignment Project (and a bit of a 'déjà vu' in relation to 1990s "integrated transport planning") and something on an old colleague Emeritus Research Fellow Mayer Hillman, a 'giant among the research community' who over many decades championed the cause of both cyclists and pedestrians, including dispelling with hard data the myth that cycling is something too dangerous to do on the roads.

Meanwhile, I continue to work for local Councils in the Wairarapa on walking and cycling, implementing strategies and servicing local advisory groups. The Carterton strategy is a "*Walking and Cycling*" strategy. We've all no doubt heard a lot of breezy hype about how lovely and good for us cycling is, but walking, arguably at least, has somewhat lost out.

So let me close with a big pat on the back for the NZ Transport Agency for the raised zebra crossing they recently installed outside Carterton's Medical Centre – an obvious place, if ever there was one, with many people, some elderly or infirm, wanting to cross the road at this point. Some of them had pressed for this crossing, and have now seen their efforts rewarded.

What's significant is that until relatively recently, raised crossings on state highways were a 'no-no' because of their effect on trucks. The Transport Agency has now changed its view, although motorists do need to take care and will take a bit of getting used to this. The safety benefits derive from a slight arresting of attention which will no doubt make walking just a bit more inviting and pleasant here.



With best wishes

**Roger**

*Said crossing on State highway 2, Carterton*