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18 May 2009

The Manager  
Draft Long Term Council Community Plan Consultation  
Wellington City Council  
PO Box 2199  
WELLINGTON

Dear Sir/Madam

**Introduction**

The New Zealand Retailers Association wishes to present the following summary submission in respect of the Council's draft Long Term Community Plan 2009-2019.

**Background**

The Association is the largest group representing the retail industry in New Zealand and Wellington. Our membership includes the major supermarkets and general merchandise chains, specialist chains and thousands of owner operators spread throughout the country. The membership also includes a number of specialised trade groups representing manufacturers, distributors and retailers in the plumbing materials, metal fastener, pet, equestrian, jewellery, bicycle and sporting goods sectors.

Viewed nationally retail sales now total some \$66b per annum and increased by 1.4% between 2007 and 2008. Viewed regionally sales within the jurisdiction of the Wellington Regional Council now total \$7.3b per annum, representing some 10.6% of total sales in New Zealand. Between 2007 and 2008, sales within the Wellington region increased by 5.4%.

**General Submission**

The Association welcomes the opportunity to make submissions on the draft Council Community Plan 2009-19. We acknowledge the seriousness with which the Council has approached this issue through its series of consultative discussions with interested parties and also the thoroughness of the documentation that has been released by the Council as part of its consultative process on the plan.

***Inner city retail***

The Association is interested to note that the Council has reaffirmed its belief that "a thriving retail sector in the heart of the city is an important part of Wellington's appeal" and the comment that "we offer free parking at weekends to encourage residents and visitors to the city to shop and access other services".

We have no disagreement with the principal of this objective provided at the same time that the long term policy for central city retail is balanced against other policies developed by the Council

for shopping centres and retailing in the suburbs. You may recall that we have made recent submissions on both of these issues<sup>1</sup> arguing that it was unwise for the Council to 'pick winners' in respect of different sectors of the retail industry in Wellington given that we did not think such a policy approach was in the best interests of either Wellington city or the Wellington region. We therefore consider that a long term plan for Wellington retail as a whole should take priority ahead of a policy specifically aimed at retail in the inner city, particularly central Wellington or the Golden Mile, and recommend this be considered as part of the Council's consideration of the long term community plan.

### ***Major events***

We note the priority given in the draft plan to city promotions, events and attractions and the specific proposals to support key projects that include promoting the city as part of the 2011 World Cup and supporting Positively Wellington Tourism, particularly its on line strategy to bring greater numbers of tourists to Wellington city. We see that major events that include the annual Wearable Arts awards, as well the increasing numbers of cruise ships now visiting Wellington city, are vitally important to fostering the vitality of retailing within Wellington city and the Wellington region. To derive maximum financial advantage we need visitors to be held in the city for "days" by any such events.

### ***Business Support***

We are similarly supportive in principle of the Council's general aim to foster business relationships both within the city and in the region, through its involvement with the Wellington Regional Strategy and the new Grow Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency. We recognise that increased high speed broadband links will assist to enhance the city's infrastructure and that ongoing support to Wellington tourism and Wellington International airport will facilitate both tourist and business linkages for the city.

We believe that the Council currently has good relationships with retail and similar sectoral groups both at Councillor and Council officer level but do commend that the Council consider the idea of a regular, say three monthly, forum with business groups in the city whereby issues of common interest can be collectively discussed and policy options resolved. Such forums have been held periodically in the past. However we commend the idea that a wider consultative business group meeting on a regular basis in the future would assist in the implementation of the Council's annual plan, as well as with its long term community plan

### ***Transport***

We note that transport planning and transport networks are a feature of the proposed ten year community plan, and, in particular, the recognition given to the fact that Wellingtonians should have good access from homes to shops and places of work and recreation, priority walking routes to and within the central city, and access to parking. Our support for adequate parking facilities to meet consumers' expectations, both on street and in parking buildings, has been well documented in submissions over the years, as has our support for on-going free parking within the city at weekends. However, we consider this plan provides yet another opportunity to review the number of buses that operate within the city, particularly from out-of-city suburbs such as Eastbourne and the Kapiti Coast, and to that end we recommend that the Strategy give consideration to the establishment of bus hubs at respective points within the city, say at Lambton Quay and Courtenay Place, with buses within the city confined to a circular routing between these hubs.

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<sup>1</sup> NZRA submissions "WCC Draft Centres Policy Review, July 2008" & "WCC Planning our Suburbs Review, April 2009"

### ***Environment/Cleanliness in the City***

We are pleased to note that waste reduction and energy conservation is part of the draft 10 year community plan. It is our view that a clean city, which includes regular and efficient waste disposal, as well as ongoing policies designed to mitigate tagging visibility, all auger well for the image of a vibrant city that appeals to both residents and tourists alike. We are consequently supportive in principle of the initiatives set out in the plan which, inter alia, encourages people and business to reduce the amount of waste they produce and to reuse and recycle wherever possible. Delivery of "cleanliness" has been an issue and greater resources need to be directed to this aspect of the Council's work.

### ***Liaison with other Councils***

We acknowledge the considerable work undertaken by the Council in developing its proposed Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-2119. We understand this is a current statutory requirement and would therefore expect similar plans to be prepared by the other Councils in the greater Wellington region. However, given the Government's recently announced proposals for local government reform in Auckland, we recommend that the Council discuss its draft plans and particular policy proposals with the other Councils, as well as with the Wellington Regional Council, to explore policy initiatives of common interest with the objective of reducing costs to both businesses and consumers alike.

### **Conclusion**

As stated, we welcome the release of the Councils draft plan. We are pleased that retail has been recognised as a key economic barometer in the plan and believe that some of the policy options proposed will likely benefit retail, as well as consumers, in a positive way, in the forthcoming decade.

We would like to appear to speak to our submission.

Yours sincerely

Barry Hellberg  
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS CONSULTANT