

Report No.	20-117
Information Only - No Decision Required	

GENERAL UPDATE AND SUBMISSIONS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with updates on various documents and consultation items released by Central Government and Agencies.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 20-117 and Annex.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There will be no financial impact as a result of this item

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. None required.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. There is no significant business risk impact as a result of this item.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. Since December 2019, a steady stream of updates and documents have been released by Government, which relate to key projects underway in the transport sector. In many cases, these documents will guide our own planning and decision making at a regional level and it is therefore important to be across them and submit feedback where required.
- 6.2. Items were presented to the Committee in March and June outlining a number of these documents which the RTC has submitted on. Updates have been provided below on each of these documents as well as some new consultation documents that are underway.

7. GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENT ON LAND TRANSPORT

- 7.1. Members will recall that government released the draft **Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (draft GPS, 2021)** for consultation in March 2020. The Committee submitted on the draft GPS, 2021 in May. Since closing of the consultation period, it is understood that work has been undertaken to update the draft GPS and a revised version was taken to Cabinet on 10 August 2020.
- 7.2. At the time of writing, a final GPS, 2021 had not been released and no further indications given on when we can expect the final version to be released.

8. ARATAKI

- 8.1. Arataki is the NZ Transport Agency's 10-year view outlining what is needed to deliver on the Government's current priorities and long term objectives for land transport. It was previously called the Long Term Strategic View (LTSV).
- 8.2. The RTC provided feedback on Arataki in February. Following receipt of about 50 pieces of feedback, the Waka Kotahi, NZ Transport Agency released a new version (Version 1.1) of Arataki which included a series of technical amendments and research into the impacts of Covid-19 on regions. Arataki Version 2.0 is due to be released later this year, which will incorporate an assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on the land transport system and identify the post-COVID opportunities over the next 10 years. Indications at the time of writing are that Arataki Version 2.0 will be released late September.

9. DRAFT NEW ZEALAND RAIL PLAN

- 9.1. The **draft New Zealand Rail Plan (draft Rail Plan)** is a new document developed by the Ministry of Transport (MoT) which sets out the government's strategic direction for rail and signals investment priorities in the rail network over a 10 year period. It feeds into the GPS and will guide the Rail Investment Programme (RNIP).
- 9.2. The draft Rail Plan was initially released in December 2019 and called for submissions by 11 May 2020. The Committee submitted on the draft Rail Plan in May.
- 9.3. Following consideration of submissions, an updated Rail Plan was due to be presented to Cabinet (alongside the draft GPS) on 10 August. At the time of writing a final Rail Plan had not been released, with no indication given when the final Plan may be available.

10. REGIONAL FREIGHT HUB

- 10.1. KiwiRail is progressing plans for a high-tech, intermodal freight hub which will help grow Palmerston North's role as a critical freight distribution centre for the lower North Island. It will support rail and road transport working together to meet the freight demand in the lower North Island, while boosting the regional economy. The project is known as the Regional Freight Hub.
- 10.2. The KiwiRail Regional Freight Hub has attracted funding from the **Provincial Growth Fund (PGF)** to design a regional growth/freight hub in the region, designate land use for rail and commence purchasing the required land. On 2 July 2020 Regional Economic Development Minister Shane Jones announced the preferred site of the Regional Freight Hub.
- 10.3. The preferred site is partially in the North East Industrial Zone, stretching over rural land north towards Bunnythorpe. It is close to Palmerston North's major distribution businesses and Palmerston North Airport.
- 10.4. Over July, KiwiRail sought informal feedback on the location of the Freight Hub prior to moving forward with the designation process. Horizons provided feedback and this is attached as Annex A.
- 10.5. The indicative timeline provided by KiwiRail are as follows:
 - July 2020: Preferred site announced.
 - From July 2020: Seeking public feedback as the Hub design is finalised and mitigations are developed.
 - Expected September 2020: Designation process begins - which includes public notification and further opportunities for public input.

- After the designation is complete and land has been purchased, the next stage will be to begin planning to build the Regional Freight Hub, including any necessary resource consents, building consents and other third-party approvals.

11. MARTON FREIGHT HUB

- 11.1. On 18 August 2020, Minister Hon Shane Jones announced that the Government will help fund the construction of a rail hub in Rangitikei dedicated to handling and transporting logs from around the lower North Island. The facility, to be built in Marton, will receive \$9.1 million from the Government's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Once complete and operational, the Marton Freight Hub will enable more efficient log transportation in the lower North Island. It is expected that the hub will create more jobs, attract more commercial developments in the area and take freight trucks off the roads.
- 11.2. Timing surrounding design and construction of the freight hub is not yet known, however further updates will be provided to the Committee once more information comes to light.

12. NORTHERN EXPLORER

- 12.1. In March 2020, the Northern Explorer train service was shut down due to Covid-19. It was not reinstated when the Country came out of lockdown. Following support from local and regional councils, KiwiRail announced the Northern Explorer service would resume for the summer season.
- 12.2. It is noted, there is local and regional drive and support to change the function of the Northern Explorer from a tourist train to a passenger commuter train, which will be reliant on additional funding required to support the service and keep fares at an appropriate level. There is also support for changing the name from Northern Explorer to Northern Connector to reflect the change in purpose. Any updates on progress with this project will be made available to the Committee.

13. LAND TRANSPORT (RAIL) LEGISLATION BILL

- 13.1. The **Land Transport (Rail) Legislation Bill (Rail Bill)** seeks to make changes to the **Land Transport Management Act (LTMA)** to provide for Rail as part of the land transport system and therefore allow for a more long-term strategic planning focus for the rail network, the ability to consider road and rail investment together, and an integrated funding/investment programme.
- 13.2. From a regional planning perspective, these changes should enable integration of rail investment projects into the Regional Land Transport Plan which will allow rail to be considered as part of the wider land transport picture for our region.
- 13.3. The RTC submitted on this Bill. The Bill was updated following consultation and reported back to the house on 1 May. Updates provided to the **Transport Special Interest Group (TSIG)** advised that the changes made following consultation include:
- 13.3.1. Partial integration model retained, but strengthened to support better alignment to the land transport system.
- 13.3.2. The Rail Network Investment Plan (RNIP) will take into account the GPS and LTMA purpose.
- 13.3.3. Time period for RNIP planning extended to align with the NLTP and RLTP processes.
- 13.3.4. Clarification on the date that the RNIP will take effect.
- 13.3.5. NZ Transport Agency to provide advice to the Minister on whether the RNIP takes into account any relevant RLTPs to ensure informed decision-making by ministers.

- 13.4. Some of these changes align with points raised in the RTC submission and will hopefully enable early engagement with the sector and better planning at a regional level for rail investment.
- 13.5. The Bill has had second and third readings in Parliament with Royal Assent on 30 June 2020, which means the changes to the legislation now have legal effect.

14. LAND TRANSPORT (NZTA) LEGISLATION BILL – SPEED MANAGEMENT PLANS

- 14.1. The **Land Transport (NZTA) Legislation Amendment Bill (the Bill)** proposes changes to the Land Transport Management Act to enable the establishment of a framework around speed management by strengthening Ministry of Transport (MoT) and the NZ Transport Agency's regulatory leadership in this space. The changes will give the NZ Transport Agency the ability to invoke powers and require the RTC to complete actions around speed management, specifically, speed limits and the development of a regional speed management plan.
- 14.2. A submission was made on behalf of Horizons Regional Council in February.
- 14.3. Since close of submissions, the Bill has had second and third readings in Parliament with Royal Assent on 6 August 2020, which means the changes to the legislation now have legal effect. For the region, this means we can expect the development of regional speed management plans and associated guidance to come to light in the coming months.

15. MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT: PROPOSED APPROACH TO SETTING OF SPEED MANAGEMENT – GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

- 15.1. The government is developing the setting of speed limits rule (the draft rule) as part of its Tackling Unsafe Speeds programme. This is intended to give effect to a new regulatory framework for speed management and the requirements for safer speed limits outside schools and will replace the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2017.
- 15.2. The Ministry of Transport have released a guidance document designed to provide local government and key stakeholders with visibility of the direction of the proposed changes and enable provision of additional input into drafting of the new 'setting of speed limits rule' ahead of formal consultation. It is understood that formal consultation is planned to occur after the general election.
- 15.3. It is understood that Local Government New Zealand are intending to provide feedback on this guidance document and are working closely with the TSIG road safety workstream (which Horizons transport staff are on) to ensure regional sector feedback is well represented.
- 15.4. Given the impact the setting of speed limits rule will have for our region, it is our intention to provide feedback on this guidance document prior to the formal consultation phase.

16. SIGNIFICANCE

- 16.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

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ANNEXES

- A Horizons feedback - KiwiRail Regional Freight Hub