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Enquiries to: Julie Hansen



Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240, NZ

waikatoregion.govt.nz
0800 800 401

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NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
Private Bag 106602
Auckland 1143

Email: PTDG@nzta.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam

Waikato Regional Council feedback to Public transport design guidance: network infrastructure for articulated buses draft guidance note

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the consultation document *Public transport design guidance: network infrastructure for articulated buses draft guidance note*. Please note that this response is technical feedback prepared by staff and has not been formally endorsed by Waikato Regional Council (WRC) or a committee of the Council.

WRC welcomes the introduction of these design guidelines. While we currently do not have immediate plans to introduce articulated buses until the supporting infrastructure is comprehensively understood, funded and implemented, they align closely with WRC's long-term vision for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) described within the Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan 2022-2032. Articulated buses on key corridors are integral to supporting our BRT vision, enhancing public transport efficiency, and meeting future demand.

As articulated buses are new to us, we will rely on NZTA's guidance to navigate operational aspects effectively. Our primary query pertains to the size of bus stops. WRC notes that existing bus stops are designed to be 15m in length with 6m on either end for the tapering entry and exit for a standard 12m bus (total 27m). An additional 3m tapering space on either end is usually included for buses 14m long (total 33m). The proposed bus stop for an articulated bus is 20m length with a tapering entry of 20m and an exit of 9-15m appears to be sufficient (total up to 55m). We note that identifying and reallocating 50m+ of roading space to off-lane bus stops without undue impacts on entry to properties is likely to become problematic in some locations. We recommend consideration of the use of in-lane bus stops, which can reduce the space required to only the length of the vehicle.

Regarding driver training, we note the importance of additional training for drivers transitioning from standard to articulated buses due to differences in vehicle weight, length and turning characteristics. Clarity on the appropriate driver license for articulated buses is required, due to both their articulation and weight (particularly if EV). We presume that the class 2 license would be insufficient and that a class 3 or 5 (or both) may be required. How would NZTA assist with the costs of this transition, which if sector-led will be on-charged to Public Transport Authorities?

Lastly, we expect that Road Controlling Authorities responsible for roading infrastructure will provide detailed feedback on the proposed roading designs outlined in the guidelines.

Thank you for considering our feedback on these crucial guidelines. We look forward to continued collaboration with NZTA to advance public transport infrastructure in our region.

If you have any queries regarding this feedback, please contact Julie Hansen, Senior Policy Advisor Transport and Infrastructure, Transport Policy and Programmes directly on (07) 8584631 or by email Julie.Hansen@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil King', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phil King
Director Regional Transport Connections