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Queries to: Kimberley Bell



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Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission on the draft Bay of Plenty Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2034

This submission was formally endorsed by the Waikato Regional Transport Committee under delegated authority of the chair on 11 March 2024.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the draft Bay of Plenty Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2034. As a neighbouring region and key transport partner, we support Bay of Plenty's strategic direction with its focus on five core areas: safety, environmental sustainability, accessibility, resilience and supporting growth. This direction aligns well with Waikato's draft RLTP and highlights the importance of joined thinking and links between the two regions.

We commend the Bay of Plenty Regional Transport Committee on developing a comprehensive and robust document, which looks to address land transport issues that are of mutual significance to the Waikato region. We **support** the strategic upper North Island context and policies in your draft RLTP and the importance of taking a collaborative approach to infrastructure planning and investment, particularly for the SH1/29 East Coast Main Trunk Line. This sharing of knowledge has resulted in strong inter-regional policy alignment and identification of mutually significant inter-regional activities.

Detailed submission points

We specifically **support** the following economic prosperity policies in your draft RLTP, where the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) has been identified as a key implementation partner:

Policy 4.1 – “Co-ordinate planning and prioritise investment for roads, rail, and shipping to ensure that freight movements in the region and the upper North Island are managed in an integrated manner. (Waka Kotahi, KiwiRail, Port of Tauranga, BOPRC, WRC, city, and district councils).”

Policy 4.2 – “Collaborate with neighbouring regions, city and district councils, Waka Kotahi and KiwiRail to protect the function of existing and future inter-regional strategic transport corridors. (UNISA, BOPRC, WRC, AC, GDC, HBRC, HRC, Waka Kotahi, KiwiRail, city and district councils).”

Policy 4.7 – “Promote, develop, and protect the State Highway 1/29-East Coast Main Trunk corridor as the strategic long-term corridor connecting Auckland and the Waikato with the Bay of Plenty. (UNISA, Waka Kotahi, KiwiRail, city and district councils, BOPRC, WRC, AC).”

He taiao mauriora ▲ **Healthy environment**

He hapori hihiri ▲ **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari ▲ **Strong economy**

Policy 4.9 – *“Improve and maintain key inter and intra-regional tourism routes to provide safe and efficient access to major tourist destinations. (Waka Kotahi, regional tourism organisations, city, and district councils, BOPRC, WRC).”*

Policy 4.10 – *“Strongly advocate for increased investment in rail capacity, rolling stock and future passenger rail in the region and the upper North Island to accommodate projected inter and intra-regional freight and people movements. (Regional Transport Committees, UNISA, KiwiRail, BOPRC, WRC, AC).”*

These policies are complimentary to policies in section 3.6 of our draft Waikato RLTP, Growth and economic development and strategic corridors templates. The Bay of Plenty Regional Council has been identified as a key partner in implementing this corresponding inter-regional policy.

Collectively, these policies will protect the function of, and prioritise investment to our strategically important road and rail corridors, ensuring the efficiency of freight movements in the upper North Island. Focussing on efficiency and enhancing the role of rail through the upper North Island will also contribute to our climate change and resilience responsibilities.

We also specifically **support** the following activities of inter-regional significance:

- SH 29 Piarere to Tauriko - SH 29 corridor improvements arising from the SH 29 Piarere to Tauriko business case
- SH 2 Waihi to Tauranga Corridor Programme - Five key packages of work focused on improving road safety, providing more reliable journey times and supporting growth
- Waihi to Waihi Beach Cycle Trail - Development of a cycleway linkage that connects the Hauraki Cycle Trail in the Waikato to Waihi Beach in the Bay of Plenty region.

The draft Waikato RLTP also identifies corridor improvements on SH29 from Piarere to Tauriko and activities that improve safety outcomes on the SH2 corridor, to improve overall efficiency of the strategic transport network in and around the Port of Tauranga.

It is noted that our draft also identifies rail activities on the East Coast Main Trunk line (ECMT) as inter-regionally significant for our two regions. Section 4.4 “Inter-regionally significant activities” in the draft Waikato RLTP includes :

“Support activities that enhance resilience and efficiency of the ECMT, including future proofing for future inter-regional passenger rail (electrification of rail network, Kaimai Tunnel, 3rd and 4th main lines on NIMT).”

“Support the Bay of Plenty business case for a Hamilton to Tauranga inter-regional passenger rail service.”

“Support the Bay of Plenty in extending cross-boundary public transport services (e.g. Waihi Beach to Waihi).”

The Waikato draft RLTP has also included Inter-regional initiatives identified by Future Proof (Waikato) and Smart Growth (Bay of Plenty) partners.

We **request** that the wording included in table 5.13 of the Bay of Plenty draft RLTP is amended to read: *“There is the potential to Support re-introduction of inter-regional passenger rail services between Tauranga, Hamilton and Auckland.”* This will ensure consistency across our RLTPs and further highlight the importance of rail in the upper North Island.

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity to submit on your draft RLTP and we wish you well with the final stage of your RLTP development process.

Please note, we **do not** wish to be heard in respect of this submission.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this submission please contact Kimberley Bell, Policy Advisor, Transport Policy and Programmes team directly on (07) 859 0595 or by email kimberley.bell@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Downard', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

Councillor Mich'eal Downard
Chair of Waikato Regional Transport Committee.