

1 May 2025

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Attn: Annual Plan

### **Submission on Annual Plan Issue 1 – Public Transport**

1. Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) thanks Horizons Regional Council (Horizons) for this opportunity to comment on its Long-term Plan amendment and 2026 Annual Plan. Our submission is focused on Annual Plan Issue 1 – Public Transport Funding.

### **Summary**

2. KCDC notes that Annual Plan Issue 1 indicates an intention to change existing and planned services in Horowhenua, which may impact cross-boundary public transport services currently available from Kāpiti.
3. These services are critical for Kāpiti communities, and particularly Ōtaki, as many residents travel to Levin and Palmerston North for access to health and social services, and employment.
4. KCDC seeks clarification as to what services will be impacted by this change and would appreciate the opportunity to work with Horizons and Horowhenua to ensure these critical services meet the needs of all Districts.

### **Background**

5. Through a number of past Long-term Plans, Regional Road and Land Transport Plans, and Regional Growth Framework and Priority Development Area work, KCDC has previously advocated to Horizons and our other regional partners<sup>1</sup> on the transport needs of our northern residents. In these submissions we have raised the issues arising from poor cross regional boundary connections between Kāpiti and

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<sup>1</sup> Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC), the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA), and KiwiRail

Horowhenua districts and to the Horizons region more widely, and the impact this has on the transport disadvantaged populations of Kāpiti's north.

6. KCDC believes the planning and delivery of these services is vital to support alignment of national, regional, and local growth and transport outcomes for the Kāpiti-Horowhenua area and to align with the wider Regional Work around Priority Development Areas.
7. Transport connections between the Kāpiti and Horowhenua Districts, and through to Horizons, are vitally important for our communities. Residents from Ōtaki and its rural surrounds are a Priority Development Area and particularly rely on these connections for accessing social, health, educational and employment services and opportunities in Levin and Palmerston North.
8. While KCDC is pleased the Capital Connection train service will run more frequently from 2029. However, until this occurs, there is a continued need for frequent and reliable bus services between Ōtaki and Levin, and Palmerston North for regional services. As noted above, residents in Ōtaki and environs are very reliant on these bus services to meet their wellbeing needs. Once the train services begin, likely cheaper bus services will continue to be required to meet all demand needs.
9. Without reliable public transport residents from Kāpiti will be unable to access services, amenities, and employment, critical to supporting their wellbeing and financial stability.

#### **Annual Plan Issue 1 – Public Transport Funding.**

10. Annual Plan Issue 1 – Public Transport Funding indicates that, due to reduced funding from NZTA for public transport, “improvements and new services [for Horowhenua] will not be at the same levels initially planned (p.20, Consultation document)”.
11. KCDC does not consider this statement provides enough detail for either District to adequately assess the potential impact on its communities, and requests further detail around which new services will not be introduced at the same levels as initially planned under Horizon's 2024-2034 Long-term Plan, as well as any potential impacts to current services (e.g. those between Levin and Waikanae) resulting from this funding shortfall.
12. Should these reductions in proposed services include any step-back from supporting Horowhenua-Kāpiti cross-boundary services, KCDC would be extremely concerned and would like to discuss with Horizons and our other regional partners about possible solutions to the funding shortfall.

Yours sincerely



Darren Edwards  
**Chief Executive**  
**Kāpiti Coast District Council**