

23 April 2021

Chair Rachel Keedwell  
Horizons Regional Council  
Private Bag 11025  
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Palmerston North 4442

Dear Chair

### **Horizons Regional Council's proposed 2021-31 Long-term Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity for the Kāpiti Coast District Council (the Council) to submit on the proposed 2021-2031 Long-term Plan. Our submission is focused on the proposed community outcome of 'effective transport networks', which we fully support.

Kāpiti has seen significant growth in the last 30 years, and this trend is expected to escalate over the coming years. The [Wellington Regional Growth Framework](#) (WRGF), which includes Horowhenua, signals two substantial growth corridors across the wider Wellington region. Around 43% of anticipated growth in the region is anticipated to be along the Western Growth Corridor from Tawa to Levin. It specifically anticipates that Kāpiti will play a significant role in providing additional housing capacity to accommodate this growth. Improved transport connections including public transport on road and rail is a critical necessity.

Council is responding to the WRGF through the development of our own refreshed Growth Strategy and also considering linkages with the strategic objectives and transport priorities identified in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan (WRLTP). Through this work we have identified that the connectivity and modes of public transport available to residents in the Ōtaki ward are inadequate.

Many residents in the Ōtaki ward of Kāpiti look to the Horizons region for services including health care, employment, financial services, retail and economic opportunities. To support and strengthen this relationship, and meet the level of growth indicated in the WRGF, there needs to be a clear and co-ordinated plan for high quality public transport between the Horizons and Wellington regions.

The connectivity between Horizons and the Kāpiti district, as the gateway to the Wellington Region, should be supported and recognised further in the Long Term Plan, particularly through cross border working and improvements of rail and bus services between Kāpiti, Levin and Palmerston North to better facilitate access to the essential services mentioned above.

Council has been advocating for improved services and connectivity in the north of our District for a long time. This will become increasingly important, not only to support the level of growth identified in the WRGF, but to give effect to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) and capitalise on the opportunities it presents for the Horizons and Wellington regions.

Whilst Council supports the development of the Ōtaki to North Levin project, the development of public transport services in the north of our District will be equally, if not more, important in supporting sustainable growth and travel patterns and supporting transition to a zero carbon economy. Public transport is possibly even more important than the expressway in meeting the social and economic needs of residents in the Ōtaki ward, which rates 9 in the 2013 Deprivation Index. With this low socioeconomic profile, public transport solutions for Ōtaki will also need to be affordable (e.g. reduced fares for Community Service Card holders).

Council seeks the extension of double tracking and electrification of the rail north of Waikanae, to better serve our northern communities with south-bound connections. We consider that addressing the needs of Ōtaki and further north, and advocating for electrification and more frequent services through to Palmerston North, will go some way to delivering sustainable growth.

The North Island rail network is electrified from Wellington station to Waikanae, and also from Palmerston North to Te-Rapa north of Hamilton. There is a strategic opportunity, and good reason, to plug this gap between Waikanae and Palmerston North by extending the electrified passenger train network further north. Within this context we understand that the Manawatū line north of Palmerston North operates on a different voltage to the electrified network south of Waikanae, and we assume this will be taken into account in the rolling stock requirements. Council also supports improvements to the Lower North Island rail services and rolling stock, as well as cost sharing between Horizons and Greater Wellington regional councils.

We also understand that the proposals relating to rolling stock on the Manawatū Line are based on the assumption that 90% of funding for rolling stock will come from Waka Kotahi. Council would be pleased to support the Regional Authorities in advocating for the funding to support delivery.

We note that, whilst there is a business case proposed for infrastructure improvements to the Manawatū line in the Regional Public Transport Plan, implementation is likely to take place in the medium term to 2028, and we consider that this should be brought forward.

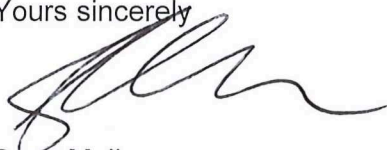
Council has submitted on the Draft New Zealand Rail Plan and would like to share some of our comments with you. Our comments included:

- calling for infrastructure improvements and to be implemented more quickly than is envisaged in the plan;
- supporting investment in the Capital Connect service, and consider that funding for both infrastructure and rolling stock is required to realise service improvements;
- acknowledging investment proposals for the Kāpiti Line but seeking that these should be recognised as more than just future opportunities;
- supporting full electrification of the North Island Main Trunk Line;
- urge that cross border complexities should not disadvantage our community and project delivery.

Again, we fully support 'effective transport networks' as a proposed community outcome, and seek to ensure that the level of public transport available to residents in our northernmost suburbs is sufficient to meet their needs now and in the future.

We thank you for considering our feedback.

Yours sincerely



Sean Mallon  
**Acting Chief Executive**