

28 March 2025

Metlink RPTP Review 2025
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Submission to Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Regional Public Transport Plan (draft Plan), and the workshop and engagement to date that has enabled us to share the public transport needs for Kāpiti in response to expected growth.

Whilst the draft Plan reflects some of the key public transport issues faced by Kāpiti district, we note that in the 'Our Plan' box on p.103 of the Kāpiti Coast Regional Focus section, seven of the eight actions listed are to "investigate" or "plan". As we have previously submitted, the Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) would like to see greater emphasis on timely deliverables including:

- When and how public transport improvements will be delivered to better serve our residents;
- Actions to ensure we meet the needs of our 'transport disadvantaged population'; and
- A commitment to support the long-term growth outcomes for Kāpiti Coast and the western Wellington – Kapiti – Horowhenua growth corridor, where significant development is occurring now.

KCDC would like to progress this work, with you as a key partner, with greater urgency.

More specific points where we seek changes to the Plan are outlined in our submission below. This submission has been informed by information from our community advisory groups including the Kāpiti Youth Council, Kāpiti Health advisory Group, Kāpiti Older Persons Council and the Age Friendly Approach and its Reference Group.

1. Kāpiti is growing and needs a clear plan for its public transport infrastructure

- 1.1 The Kāpiti Coast is strategically well-placed in the middle of the western Wellington – Kāpiti – Horowhenua growth corridor, providing support for growth and connections of residents and businesses to the north and south. However, this places us on the edge of the Greater Wellington regional transport network, meaning that we face additional challenges for traditional public transport services and options, when compared to more densely populated areas of the Wellington Region.
- 1.2 High levels of development continue to happen on the Kāpiti Coast to meet ongoing residential demand, both intensifying current urban areas and enveloping new greenfield areas. We are driving sustainable urban development that aims to deliver 'good growth', as part of our Strategy for "Growing Well" and the Horowhenua-Wellington – Wairarapa Future Development Strategy.
- 1.3 Our Growing Well approach aims to increase housing supply rapidly, whilst also ensuring we protect our environment and reduce carbon emissions. Planning for a wider range of public transport options in the short and longer-term is critical for achieving our communities' aspirations.
- 1.4 Recent government changes have also seen an acceleration of growth through a number of 'fast-track' developments in the district. These predominantly greenfield and more intensive developments, signal the need for action now to meet a growing under-served demand, and prompt planning for transit-oriented development. Greater Wellington needs to more actively work with KCDC to ensure future bus access and connections and interchanges to future train stations are provided for now.

<p><u>KCDC supports</u> the Plan's recognition for the need to plan for future growth and inter-regional public transport demand arising from expected growth in our district. However, the timing and sequencing of responses to this growth needs to reflect the current low levels of service and opportunities to secure long-term benefits from early planning and investment.</p>

2. Interregional train service and future stations provide key connectivity for the district

2.1 KCDC is pleased to see the commitment in the draft Plan to:

- Introduce interregional train services by 2028, which will provide a significant addition to current connections for the Kāpiti Coast, with a complete rail passenger spine from Palmerston North, Levin, Kāpiti, and Wellington to the south. This will be a vital improvement for residents in the Ōtaki and the northern part of our district to access critical health and social services, education, and employment opportunities – access that many other regional residents currently enjoy.
- Increase in the frequency of services between Palmerston North and Wellington that will double the current Capital Connection timetable.

2.2 KCDC would like to see Greater Wellington:

- Commit to more frequent local services between Levin and Paekākāriki to improve connectivity options across the Horowhenua – Kāpiti districts.
- Prioritise locations identified in our Growth Strategy (including stations at Otaihanga and Waikanae North/Peka Peka) and actions to support future growth intentions and to provide opportunity for transit-oriented developments which the Government is approving through the Fast-Track process.
- Actively plan for growth and future stations and interchanges now. We note that the Paraparaumu Train station is not included in the list of work on p.103. Our assumption is because the station works are due to be completed this financial year but seek clarification on this.

KCDC requests that the Plan includes a stronger commitment and undertaking from Greater Wellington Regional Council to work with Kāpiti Coast, Horowhenua and Horizons councils on the strategic planning and expansion of services to support alignment of national regional and local growth and transport outcomes for the Kāpiti-Horowhenua area.

3. Additional short-term connections needs for the Ōtaki and Te Horo area

3.1. While we support these initiatives, we would like to see them fast-tracked beyond investigation, particularly where they impact vulnerable communities; our older people, youth and the currently isolated communities of Ōtaki and Te Horo.

3.2. KCDC would like clarification on the timing for:

- Stronger connections for Ōtaki, to the rest of the district in the south, and to its main service centre at Levin to the north, currently 'noted' in the Plan.
- Provision of new bus services – ideally, ahead of new trains arriving to make the most of the new rail services and address park and ride issues in Waikanae and Paraparaumu (discussed further below).

KCDC requests that further details are added to the Plan, of when and how investigation and consideration of additional services for the Ōtaki and Te Horo area will be undertaken, – and align with the wider Regional Work around Priority Development Areas (such as Ōtaki).

3.3. We note some points for correction or clarification:

- In the map on p.102, the symbols in the Key need to better reflect colour and symbols in actual use on the map. There is also a discrepancy between Route 251 called a targeted route on the map on p.100, and a peak-only bus route on map at p.102;
- Should p.15 Objectives and policies Action b(ii) refer to Horowhenua District Council rather than Manawatu?

4. Improving access to public transport services in Kāpiti for those with specific needs

4.1. KCDC agrees it is a priority to provide adequate public transport services and to ensure that Greater Wellington meets the requirements of the LTMA s.120(1)(vii) with respect to 'transport disadvantaged populations'¹. In regard to this we note that this must include:

- Access for our older population (for health services and social connection); younger population (for education, sport and social opportunities); and our more isolated and vulnerable population (for health, social, and support services).
- More frequent daytime train services and bus linkages within our district to support access to medical and social services, as well as retail and retirement villages.

4.2. KCDC would also like Greater Wellington to more seriously consider how it can future proof its services to our community, ensuring, as new vehicles and timetabling technologies become available, they are matched with:

- Improved passenger safety on the network, including where bus stops are located, ensuring safe access to get to and from bus stops; and safe waiting areas (particularly for older people and youth), and convenient and weatherproof seating.
- Certainty/reliability of bus timings and linkages to train services. For our older population in particular, they are supported in navigating a transport system that is frequently changing.
- Easier systems for attaching bicycles and prams on and off the buses (current understanding is that bus drivers don't have to help due to a health and safety risk).

KCDC supports Greater Wellington's:

- Public transport objective to provide transport choices including during off-peak periods especially for those without access to private transport.
- Emphasis for improvements to passenger experience on service frequency, reliability, and accessibility, including bus connections between Levin and Kāpiti being investigated.
- Emphasis in the Plan on connections for Kāpiti to be widened to include connecting people between Kāpiti and Horowhenua districts, and between educational institutions and job markets across the lower North Island.

¹ Greater Wellington describes transport disadvantaged population as "people who the regional council has reasonable grounds to believe are the least able to travel to basic community activities and services (for example, work, education, health care, welfare, and shopping)".

5. On-demand public transport services

5.1. Kāpiti has a significant population of older people and those who need to access public hospital services, whether to the north or south. At present these populations are not well catered for, with our one voluntary shuttle service, through Kāpiti Carers having to close at the end of 2024. We note that our community has expressed concerns as follows:

- *The Kāpiti Health Advisory Group* has advised that some of our residents without reliable access to private transport are currently at risk of not being able to access core health services.
- *The Age Friendly Reference Group* has also noted that an on-demand service in Kāpiti, with its very high older population, may provide a different cost/benefit analysis result with a well-publicised on-demand bus service, than experienced in the Tawa trial.

5.2. While the draft Plan notes Greater Wellington will not be able to offer on-demand services until more central government funding becomes available, we would urge that this is reconsidered, and that advocacy for funding is a priority.

KCDC requests that Greater Wellington:

- Meet with Kāpiti District Council officials to discuss findings from the on-demand study and the parameters that would successfully support on-demand public transport services;
- The draft Plan support further investigation with KCDC, Horizons Regional Council, central government agencies, Ōtaki Community Board and Ngā Hapu o Ōtaki to support more equitable outcomes for our 'transport disadvantaged populations', particularly youth and older people as part of the Ōtaki Priority Development Area work.

6. Impacts of moving to a cashless network

6.1. While moving to a cashless public transport system offer's benefits, it has the potential to have a greater impact in Kāpiti, particularly on our older people, the young, and infrequent users. Transitioning needs to be carefully considered to avoid perverse incentives in discouraging public transport use.

6.2. Phasing out of cash payments needs to reflect the previous approach taken that no one is left behind. Transiting should be supported by the ability to use debit/credit/efpos card options, which is more feasible for this user group and also supported by a more extensive network of charging stations and facilities – including electronic out of hours ticketing options.

KCDC opposes a blanket approach to moving to a cashless network without providing for appropriate concessions or means for those to transition.

7. Park and Ride

7.1. Both Waikanae and Paraparaumu town centres currently experience significant parking pressures due to high demand from train commuters with limited rail services further to the north. While these parking pressures may be alleviated when increased services to the north are operational, we are concerned that any use of paid parking at Park and Ride sites could have a direct negative effect on our businesses and surrounding residential areas as commuters look to park in unpaid spaces within local streets and car parks. Additional Park and Ride fees could also further disincentivise people catching the train, with many already feeling it's too expensive with the fares at the current level. We note that the draft plan:

- Transfers this problem onto local road controlling authorities. KCDC therefore requests that Greater Wellington investigate, in partnership with road controlling authorities, all potential options to assist with managing the parking demand at and around Park and Ride locations.
- Is missing an important option to address parking challenges – we propose that providing access to a fast, regular, attractive bus service, with consistent and better aligned connections, would motivate those living close to stations to use alternatives to their cars to get to the station. This could free up Park and Ride space for our residents living more remotely.

KCDC opposes introducing demand management to Metlink Park and Rides relating to Kapiti unless it is carefully planned and managed with local councils.

KCDC requests that Greater Wellington work in partnership with road controlling authorities on all potential options to assist with managing the parking demand at and around Park and Ride locations.

KCDC supports:

- Additional provision for new bus routes to Peka Peka connecting to the existing Waikanae/Ōtaki route, which will significantly constrain attempts to support mode shift in our district and lift pressure on Park and Ride facilities
- Investigation for installing more bicycle and scooter storage facilities at train stations but would also like timeframes identified for undertaking this work. We propose that the ten-bicycle Locky Dock operating at the Paraparaumu train station, since May 2024, could serve as a useful case study.

8. What a low carbon public transport network means for the Kāpiti district

8.1. Improving public transport options is a critical lever for reducing emissions in the Kāpiti Coast district, and in supporting our community to achieve the aspirational district-wide emissions reduction target “to be net zero emissions by 2040”. We note that transport-related emissions account for 57% of the Kāpiti district’s total gross emissions.

8.2. To achieve our community aspirations, it will be imperative to proactively assess and integrate public transport needs ahead of future development.

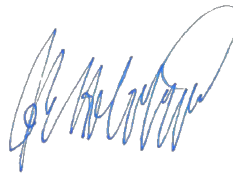
KCDC supports the Plan's strategic focus on decarbonising the public transport fleet, and we recognise that an efficient, equitable, accessible and decarbonised public transport network is key to realising a more prosperous, healthier and low carbon Kāpiti.

We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our submission, including the urgency for planning for demand management at Metlink Park and Ride facilities, and further investigation of on-demand public transport options.

Yours sincerely



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Kāpiti Coast District Council



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