

# Proposed Variations to the Regional Land Transport Plan

## Recommendation

That the Committee:

- i. Agrees to lodge the following variations to the Regional Land Transport Plan for consideration by the Auckland Transport (AT) Board:
  - a. North West Rapid Transit Corridor;
  - b. Hill Street Intersection Improvements.

## Executive Summary

1. This report seeks the agreement of the Regional Transport Committee (RTC) to lodge two variations to the 2018 Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) with the AT Board for North West Rapid Transit Corridor and Hill Street Intersection Improvements.
2. At its closed meeting of December 2019 meeting, the Board endorsed the proposals for the North West Rapid Transit Corridor Indicative Business Case and Hill Street Intersection Improvements. The report on the North West Rapid Transit Corridor has subsequently been made public.
3. Auckland's North West region is experiencing strong growth, putting significant pressure on the North West motorway and existing public transport infrastructure and services. The RLTP includes the proposal for the Transport Agency to deliver light rail in the North West Corridor LTP. However, there has been no progress on light rail to date, and it is becoming increasingly urgent to take action on this corridor. Hence, the Board endorsed the commencement of work by AT with the New Zealand Transport Agency (the Transport Agency) to quantify and confirm the early deliverables for bus infrastructure and operational changes and at a later stage identify future rapid transit corridor requirements
4. The Supporting Growth Alliance programme business case identified a number of transport infrastructure improvements needed in Warkworth to support growth, including the Hill Street intersection. Responsibility for undertaking the Hill Street intersection will lie with AT once the state highway status of the existing main road through Warkworth is revoked and the ownership of the road transfers to AT. The Board endorsed the project progressing to detailed design and consenting ahead of prioritisation in the RLTP so that it is construction ready as early as possible after Pūhoi to Warkworth (P2Wk) and Matakana Link Road (MLR) have been opened.
5. Section 16(3) of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) provides that eligibility for co-funding of any project from the National Land Transport Fund is dependent upon that project being included in the RLTP.

6. As AT intends to seek co-funding from the NLTF, variations are required to add these projects to the RLTP as AT projects. The process for varying an RLTP is laid out in section 18B of the LTMA and is the same (with necessary amendments) as the process for approving an RLTP. For Auckland, the RTC that has prepared the Variation may lodge an amended RLTP with the Board, which then determines whether to amend the RLTP. Once included in the RLTP, a variation to the National Land Transport Plan (NLTP) would be submitted to the Transport Agency for its consideration.

### Proposed Variations to the RLTP

7. The two projects proposed by AT for inclusion in the RLTP *Appendix 1 AT Capital Programme* are below.

Project Name	Project Description	Prioritisation	Duration	2019/20 (\$ million)	2020/21 (\$ million)	Total Anticipated Cost (\$ million)
North West Rapid Transit Corridor	Investigations to determine short and medium-term interventions to improve bus services to and from the North West, ahead of decisions on light rail, deliverable by AT and the Transport Agency.	2	2019/20 to 2020/21	0.750	0.250	1.0

8. The project covers the investigation phase only. Early deliverables would be determined as part of that investigation, at which time the Board will be able to consider whether to proceed with those early deliverables. A further variation to the current RLTP may be required if they are to be delivered before the next RLTP.
9. This project is not in the Auckland RLTP as there was an expectation that the Transport Agency would deliver light rail in the North West Corridor.

Project Name	Project Description	Prioritisation	Duration	2019/20 (\$ million)	2020/21 (\$ million)	2021/22 (\$million)	Total Anticipated Cost (\$ million)
Hill Street Intersection Improvements	The pre-implementation and property phases of works to improve the Hill Street - Sandspit Road – State Highway 1 intersection	2	2019/20 – 2021/22	0.300	1.900	0.700	2.900

10. This project is for the pre-implementation and property phases of works up to June 2021 to improve the Hill Street intersection. The scope does not cover the total cost of improvements. These works would occur after June 2021 and therefore can be prioritised in the next RLTP.
11. This project is included in the RLTP but as a project to be delivered by the Transport Agency. Once P2Wk is completed the state highway status of the existing main road through Warkworth will be revoked and the ownership of the road transferred to AT. Given that improvements to the Hill Street intersection are unlikely to be progressed before P2Wk and MLR has been completed they will become AT's responsibility post-revocation.
12. The Significance Policy in the RLTP determines whether an activity is a 'Significant Activity'. The projects are not considered Significant Activities as these pre-implementation projects are not considered large new improvement projects of strategic or financial importance in terms of the criteria in the Significance Policy. Therefore, they need not be included in the RLTP. However, they must be included in the RLTP if AT is to seek NLTF co-funding for these projects.
13. Also, as they are not significant activities, they do not need to be prioritised in the RLTP in terms of s.16(d) of the LTMA. However, a priority of 2 is proposed, which is consistent with all funded projects in the RLTP other than committed, ring-fenced, operational and renewal projects which are given a priority of 1.

## Financial and Programming Implications

14. The requirements of the RTC when considering an RLTP are set out in s.14 of the LTMA, and are relevant to consideration of variations to an RLTP:

### ***S.14 Core requirements of regional land transport plans***

*Before a regional transport committee submits a regional land transport plan to a regional council or AT (as the case may be) for approval, the regional transport committee must—*

*(a) be satisfied that the regional land transport plan—*

*(i) contributes to the purpose of this Act; and*

*(ii) is consistent with the GPS on land transport; and*

*(b) have considered —*

*(i) alternative regional land transport objectives that would contribute to the purpose of this Act; and*

*(ii) the feasibility and affordability of those alternative objectives; and*

*(c) have taken into account any -*

*(i) national energy efficiency and conservation strategy; and*

*(ii) relevant national policy statements and any relevant regional policy statements or plans that are for the time being in force under the Resource Management Act 1991; and*

*(iii) likely funding from any source.*

15. We consider that these projects contribute to the purpose of the LTMA to contribute to an effective, efficient, and safe land transport system in the public interest, and are consistent with the GPS. The GPS identifies objectives for investment priorities of safety, access, environment and value for money.
- a) Light rail on the north west corridor was identified in the RLTP as a strategic priority for Auckland and was funded in the RLTP. The project aligns with the objectives in the GPS of a land transport system that provides increased access to economic and social opportunities by better connecting metropolitan and high growth urban areas, and enables transport choice and access by increasing mode shift to public transport.
  - b) Hill Street Intersection was identified by the Transport Agency as a priority in its programme and was funded in the RLTP. The benefits associated with upgrading the intersection align with the objective of the GPS of a land transport system that provides increased access to economic and social opportunities by better connecting metropolitan and high growth urban areas. Its benefits include better connecting people, places, goods and services, increasing genuine travel choices, ensuring infrastructure is available prior to development and encouraging walking and cycling.
16. The addition of these two projects does not change the previous consideration of the factors in s.14 (b), and (c)(i) and (ii) made when the RLTP was originally prepared.
17. In terms of funding sources, these projects have a combined cost of \$3.9 million which is not material relative to the size of AT's \$10 billion capital programme and does not materially change the overall funding requirements set out in the RLTP.
18. Funding for the 2019/20 costs would come from the under-delivery of other projects. Current indications are that AT will deliver around 90% of the budgeted capital and renewals programme of \$903m for 2019/20 (around \$90m less than budgeted in the Approved Annual Plan for 2019/20). Therefore, these two projects, with a total cost of \$1.05 million in 2019/20, are not material in the total capital programme and are not expected to displace existing projects.

19. There will be pressure on the capital programme from 2020/21 onwards, and funding for these projects, with combined costs of \$2.15 in 2020/21 and \$0.7 million in 2021/22, would need to be prioritised against other projects in the Annual Plan/RLTP for these years. However, both projects have an element of immediacy and therefore present risks if not commenced soon.
- a. AT and the Transport Agency recognise that it is increasingly urgent to develop early infrastructure and operational interventions for bus customers on the North West corridor that can be implemented ahead of any future decision or delivery of light rail. Public transport patronage in the North West continues to grow following the roll out of the new bus network. In the past 12 months to July 2019, passenger trips have increased by 8.3% to 9.9 million trips, and there also continues to be significant further residential development in the North West growth areas, in addition to the ongoing development at Westgate. At present no active work is underway on light rail and bus patronage continues to grow. With no investment in improved bus infrastructure and operations, the efficiency and customer experience of bus services will decline.
  - b. For the Hill Street Intersection, the volume of traffic using the intersection is expected to drop significantly once the P2Wk and MLR projects have been completed in late 2021. However, traffic volumes are forecast to exceed the capacity of the intersection in its current form by 2026 due to the growth that is planned to occur in the Warkworth area. The AT Board endorsed the project progressing to detailed design and consenting ahead of prioritisation in the RLTP so that it is construction ready as early as possible after P2Wk and MLR have opened.

## External Consultation

20. Consultation is not required as this is not a 'Significant Variation' to the RLTP when considered against the criteria in the Significance Policy in the RLTP which relate to strategic importance and financial impact. The RTC need not consult on an amended RLTP if the amendment does not amount to a Significant Variation

## Next steps

21. If agreed, the proposed amendments to the RLTP will be lodged with the AT Board, which then determines whether to approve the variations to the RLTP.
22. If the variations are approved by the Board, AT will apply to the Transport Agency for NLTF co-funding for both projects. To receive NLTF co-funding, the Transport Agency will need to prioritise these projects in the NLTP. Therefore, an NLTP variation request will also be submitted to the Transport Agency for its approval.

## Document ownership

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## Glossary

Acronym	Description
GPS	Government Policy Statement on land transport 2018
LTMA	Land Transport Management Act 2003
NLTF	National Land Transport Fund
NLTP	National Land Transport Programme
RLTP	Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan 2018-28
RTC	Regional Transport Committee
The Transport Agency	New Zealand Transport Agency