

Regional Transport Committee Minutes

For the 'remote' meeting held by video/tele conference
on Wednesday 8 April 2020, commencing at 9.30am

Present:

Chairman, Councillor John Bain
NRC Councillor Rick Stolwerk
FNDC Councillor Ann Court
WDC Councillor Greg Martin
KDC Councillor David Wills
NZTA Director Regional Relationships Upper North Island, Steve Mutton

In Attendance:

Full or Part Meeting

NRC Chair
NRC Chief Executive Officer
NTA Manager
NTA Transport Manager
NTA Strategy & Planning Manager
NTA Regional Road Safety Officer
NTA Transport Planner
FNDC GM – Infrastructure & Asset Management
NRC Policy Specialist
NRC Governance Support Manager

The Chair declared the meeting open at 9.30am.

Apologies (Ngā whakapahā) (Item 1.0)

The apologies from Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency Systems Manager Northland, Jacqui Hori Hoult, and KDC GM Infrastructure, Jim Sephton, for non-attendance were noted.

Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (Nga whakapuakanga) (Item 2.0)

It was advised that members should make declarations item-by-item as the meeting progressed.

Confirmation of Minutes - 12 February 2020 (Item 3.1)

ID: A1301632

Report from Evania Arani, Executive Assistant Customer Services - Community Resilience

Moved (Stolwerk/Court)

That the minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 12 February 2020, be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried

Northland Regional Land Transport Plan 2018-2021 Funding Uptake (Item 4.1)

ID: A1294906

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance

Moved (Martin/Stolwerk) -

That the report 'Northland Regional Land Transport Plan 2018-2021 Funding Uptake' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance and dated 11 March 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 4.1

It was stressed that the Coronavirus lockdown period could result in the need for unspent national funding allocations to be carried over into the 2020/2021 financial year; particularly as the lockdown period fell within the peak annual construction period.

This was a national issue and the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency were working through the implications. An integral part of this process was working with contractors to plan for post lockdown. Whilst the safety of the construction teams was paramount it was also acknowledged that getting people back to work was critical for the nation as a whole to move forward.

Draft GPS & NZ Rail Plan & Tackling Unsafe Speeds (Item 5.1)

ID: A1295351

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance

Moved (Bain/Wills)

That the report 'Draft GPS & NZ Rail Plan & Tackling Unsafe Speeds' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance and dated 12 March 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 5.1:

Due to the Coronavirus lockdown the scheduled presentation from the Ministry of Transport regarding the Draft Government Policy Statement, the Draft Rail Plan and Tackling Unsafe Speeds Package had been cancelled. In lieu, the Ministry of Transport had prepared video presentations on each topic and web links for interested parties to ask questions and provide feedback had been included in the body of the report.

Regional Road Safety Report (Item 5.2)

ID: A1298420

Report from Ian Crayton-Brown, Transport Projects Officer

Moved (Martin/Mutton)

That the report 'Regional Road Safety Report' by Ian Crayton-Brown, Transport Projects Officer and dated 23 March 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 5.2:

Despite the Coronavirus lockdown, the New Zealand Police had reported instances of speeding and dangerous driving.

The New Zealand Police had issued a public statement urging 'people to stay at home this Easter' and would be in force on the roads over the weekend to support safe and essential travel. The Police statement to be circulated to members of the committee.

The Northland Transportation Alliance Transport Manager undertook to contact the New Zealand Police to see if they would have a 'presence south of the Brynderwyns' over the Easter period.

Regional Land Transport & Passenger Transport Plan Progress Report (Item 5.3)

ID: A1296663

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance

Moved (Stolwerk/Bain)

That the report 'Regional Land Transport & Passenger Transport Plan Progress Report' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance and dated 17 March 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 5.3:

The deadline set by the Ministry of Transport and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency for the completion and submission of the Regional Land Transport Plans and Regional Public Transport Plans was 30 April 2020. However the National Special Interest Group on transport was requesting this be reconsidered given the current pandemic event.

As a result of the Coronavirus lockdown the Investment Logic Mapping Workshop scheduled in March 2020 could not occur. Later in the discussion it was suggested this could potentially be run remotely; although it was acknowledged that technology was only effective with a limited number of participants.

Staff were liaising with their counterparts around the country to ascertain what course of action they were taking and would provide a recommended way forward to the committee in due course.

All aspects of the plans were being progressed as much as possible. However, some staff had been seconded to assist the CDEM response and sourcing information from key partners, such as the New Zealand Police, was difficult given the current situation.

At this time, the committee supported that staff, as far as practicable, adhere to the present approved timetable for the timely completion of the Regional Land Transport Plan and Regional Public Transport Plan.

Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021 (Item 5.4)

ID: A1301621

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance

Moved (Martin/Wills)

1. That the report 'Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance and dated 2 April 2020, be received.
2. That staff prepare a draft submission on the Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021 on behalf of the Regional Transport Committee and distribute for comment.

3. That on receipt of all comments, staff finalise the submission on the Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021 and distribute for approval
4. That the Regional Transport Committee Chairman be given delegated authority to approve grammatical changes and to sign the submission on the Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021 on behalf of the Regional Transport Committee

Matters arising from Item 5.4:

The Committee acknowledged that Item 5.4 was a decision making matter and technically should be Item 6.2 on the agenda.

The report provided detail on the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021.

The strategic priorities were 'largely unchanged' from the previous Government Policy Statement but four new Activity Class Funding Categories had been introduced.

Staff would assess the document in detail in order to draft a submission on behalf of the committee, which would be circulated to members for comment. Feedback would be incorporated into the submission where appropriate and delegated approval was sought for the Chair to sign the finalised submission on behalf of the committee.

Attention was drawn to the change in the strategic priority from 'Environment' to 'Climate Change' and it was stressed that it was important not to 'lose sight of provincial environmental impact which is different from urban environmental impact'.

The Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency was yet to grapple with the substantial decrease in traffic volumes and the impact it would have on revenue.

The increased focus on safety investment/rail investment and supporting coastal shipping were all positive attributes. However the challenge for Northland going forward would be that the four strategic priorities would result in 'constrained funding for the regions'.

Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency Report (Item 5.5)

ID: A1301730

Report from Steve Mutton, NZTA - Director Regional Relationships Upper North Island

Recommendation (Mutton/Bain)

That the report 'Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency Report' by Steve Mutton, NZTA - Director Regional Relationships Upper North Island and dated 2 April 2020, be received.

Carried

Matters arising from Item 5.5:

In this 'extremely complex time' the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency was focussing on:

- i. Keeping the system safe and operational;
- ii. What it meant for its key partners; and
- iii. Getting projects 'shovel ready'.

The Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency was adopting a consistent national approach and working closely with contractors to prevent them 'shedding staff' as they would need a full team to start work immediately post lockdown. An Advance Entitlement Payment (AE), cash injection, was being provided to carry contractors through.

It was noted that there was significant capacity within tier 2 contractors and the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency needed to be flexible in its approach when restarting activity.

It was stressed that the additional Regional Investment Opportunities funding into Northland was 'great news'.

Clarification was provided that the government was yet to confirm how it would fund its economic stimulus package. Applications were being sought for 'shovel ready' Crown infrastructure projects to progress as a matter of priority post lock down. The Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency Director Regional Relationships Upper North Island undertook to make enquiries whether this would impact on Provincial Growth Fund projects.

It was stressed that the supply chain was under huge pressure and risk. Equally rate increases were under pressure which could jeopardise local authorities' ability to contribute the necessary local share in projects. It was advised there was work under way to address supply chains, procurement, policies in response to Coronavirus and financial implications.

Request to Vary the Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2021 (Item 6.1)

ID: A1300432

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance

Moved (Stolwerk/Martin)

1. That the report 'Request to Vary the Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2021' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance and dated 30 March 2020, be received.
2. That the Regional Transport Committee approves the request to vary the Regional Land Transport Plan 2015/21 to include the following projects:

Far North District Council

- Opuia to Paihia Walking Track (part of Te Araroa Trail)
- Opuia to Paihia Cycle Route via Aucks Road and Russell Cycle Trail
- Waitangi to Kerikeri Cycle Trail
- Waoku Old Coach Road (to SH12) Cycle Trail (in conjunction with the Kaipara District Council)

Kaipara District Council

- Waoku Old Coach Road (to SH12) Cycle Trail (in conjunction with the Far North District Council)
- Kaihu Valley Rail Cycle Trail

Whangarei District Council

- Langs Beach to Ruakaka Cycle Trail (Waipu Trail)

Carried

(KDC Councillor David Wills abstained from voting)

Matters arising from Item 6.1:

In order for a project to be eligible for Provincial Growth Funding it must be included in the relevant land transport plan. This did not ensure they would be funded but allowed them to progress to through the application process.

This was a joint application by the three district councils to include the walking and cycling projects listed in the report and included in the Regional Walking and Cycling Strategy which had undergone public consultation.

KDC Councillor, David Wills, registered a conflict of interest and signalled he would be abstaining from voting.

Clarification was provided that the Regional Transport Committee had approved including the Kaihu Valley Rail Cycle Trail in the Regional Land Transport Plan – Three Year Review 2018/2021 in February 2019 and was listed in the report simply for completeness. In addition, the Langs Beach to Ruakaka Cycle Trail (Waipu) was included as it was increasing the scope and value assigned to the project in the RLTP (hence required a variation).

Members were provided assurance that none of the transport related projects, that required a variation, triggered the Significance Policy contained in the RLTP.

Secretarial Note: The Northland Transportation Alliance Manager undertook to circulate the documentation clarifying transport related essential services.

Conclusion

The meeting concluded at 10.33am.