

## Regional Transport Committee Minutes

Meeting held in the Council Chamber  
36 Water Street, Whangārei  
on Tuesday 9 December 2025, commencing at 1:00 pm - 3:00pm

### Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, NRC Councillor Joe Carr  
Deputy Chairperson, Councillor John Blackwell  
WDC Councillor, Brad Flower  
FNDC Councillor, Ann Court  
KDC Councillor, Rachael Williams  
KiwiRail Programme Director Northland, Eric Hennephof  
NZ Transport Agency, Director Regional Relationships, Steve Mutton  
(online)

### I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

#### Full Meeting

NRC Group Manager - Community Resilience, Louisa Gritt  
NRC Secretariat, Haylee Labelle  
NRC Governance Manager, Jane Hickmott  
NRC Alternate Member, Pita Tipene  
NRC Transport Manager, Chris Powell  
NRC Policy Specialist, Michael Payne  
WDC GM – Infrastructure, Jim Sephton  
WDC Alternate Member, Crichton Christie  
WDC CE, Simon Weston  
WDC Programme Manager - Road Safety Promotion, Nicole Korach  
FNDC Alternate Member, Rachel Baucke (online)  
FNDC Transportation Business Manager, Andy Brown  
KDC Roding Manager, Varunesh Sinha  
NZ Police Inspector, John Fagan  
Automobile Association, Tracey Risetto

#### Part Meeting

NRC Transport Project Officer, Anita Child (online)  
NRC Transport Services Coordinator, Pooja Singh

The Chair declared the meeting open at 1pm.

### Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

### Ngā whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

#### Moved (Carr / Court)

That the apologies from Councillor Lambeth for non-attendance be received.

**Carried**

### **Nga whakapuakanga/Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (Item 3.0)**

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

### **Presentation of Minutes - 5 August 2025 (Item 4.1)**

**Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience**

**Moved (Blackwell / Williams)**

1. That the minutes of the Regional Transport Committee meeting held on 5 August 2025, be noted.
2. Note that in accordance with Northland Regional Council Standing Orders, the last minutes of the triennium have been approved by the Chair and Chief Executive Officer.

**Carried**

### **Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 5.1)**

**Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience**

**Moved (Court / Carr)**

That the action sheet be received.

**Carried**

*Secretarial notes: Verbal update for Action 1 5/8/25 provided by NZTA and this action is now completed.*

*Teams are actively working on a permanent design solution to strengthen the bridge, and funding is being sought to enable construction as soon as possible.*

*Bridge inspections revealed concerns, so a temporary speed limit of 30 km/h and a reduction to one lane were implemented to distribute weight more safely. Subsequently, the bridge was kept as one lane as a semi-permanent solution while a long-term intervention was considered.*

*In October, new vehicle-triggered traffic lights and a pedestrian/cyclist crossing button were installed, along with CCTV cameras to monitor compliance and system operation. The speed limit was then raised to 60 km/h after these measures were in place.*

*A remaining issue involves a landowner's driveway affected by the new traffic light setup, which is still being resolved. NZTA clarified that the duration of the permanent works is not yet determined, as the design methodology is still under development.*

*In response to questions, NZTA confirmed that there have been no issues with slash (debris) affecting the bridge, and that observed cracking is attributed to the bridge's age rather than external factors.*

## **Regional Transport Committee Elected Representatives and Alternates (Item 6.1)**

**Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council**

**Moved (Carr / Blackwell)**

1. That the report 'Regional Transport Committee Elected Representatives and Alternates' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transport Alliance and dated 28 October 2025, be received.
2. That the formally elected Regional Transport Committee Representatives and Alternate Representatives be duly noted.

**Carried**

*Secretarial notes: Amendments to the report accepted to read Northland Regional Council in place of NTA and a change in dates to match the current triennium*

## **KiwiRail Representation on the Regional Transport Committee (Item 6.2)**

**Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council**

**Moved (Blackwell / Williams)**

1. That the report 'KiwiRail Representation on the Regional Transport Committee' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and dated 14 October 2025, be received.
2. That the Regional Transport Committee approve the appointment of a non-voting KiwiRail representative to the Regional Transport Committee.
3. That the Regional Transport Committee note that, in accordance with Section 105A of the Land Transport Management Act 2003, the KiwiRail Representative will have no voting rights.
4. That the appointed KiwiRail representative be invited to attend all Regional Transport Committee meetings for the period 2025-2028.

**Carried**

## **Regional Transport Committee Terms of Reference (Item 7.1)**

**Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council**

**Moved (Court / Williams)**

That the report 'Regional Transport Committee Terms of Reference' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and dated 28 October 2025, be received.

**Carried**

## **Regional Land Transport Plan 2021/2027 - National Funding Assistance Uptake Report (Item 7.2)**

**Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council**

**Moved (Williams/ Blackwell)**

That the report 'Regional Land Transport Plan 2021/2027 - National Funding Assistance Uptake Report' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and dated 24 November 2025, be received.

### **Carried**

*Secretarial notes: Kaipara's network is improving, with 65% of pavement rehabilitation completed for the financial year, \$20 million in capital projects, and significant emergency works from Cyclone Gabrielle. Bridge repair contracts are in procurement, and a major seawall project is progressing toward completion by mid-March.*

*Whangarei District Council (WDC) has identified Springs Flat as its largest current project, awarded all contracts, and scheduled work to continue into the next construction season. A panel established is delivering slip repairs, with one area (Memorial Drive) flagged as problematic due to high costs. WDC noted that the funding uptake report was a quarterly report and did not reflect their most recent request for fund uptake of around \$7m, reflecting the large amount of work going on around the district.*

*NZTA provided a high-level update on state highway improvements, noting some projects are under budget and that reporting periods are mixed. The importance of monitoring run rates and delivering on funding commitments was emphasised, with the potential for additional funding if projects are delivered efficiently.*

*Committee members discussed the format and level of detail for infrastructure and financial reporting to the committee, balancing the need for high-level summaries with operational detail.*

*The committee agreed to task the NRC Transport Manager to work with roading managers from each council to develop a high-level report summary template, including links to more detailed information, to be presented at the next RTC meeting.*

### **Actions**

**NRC Transport Manager to work with roading managers from each council to develop a high-level report summary with links to detailed information, and present the proposed format at the next RTC meeting..**

## **NZTA Waka Kotahi Update for Te Tai Tokerau (Item 7.3)**

**Report from Steve Mutton, NZTA - Director Regional Relationships, Te Tai Tokerau me Tāmaki Makaurau**

### **Moved (Mutton/ Carr)**

That the report 'NZTA Waka Kotahi Update for Te Tai Tokerau' by Steve Mutton, NZTA - Director Regional Relationships, Te Tai Tokerau me Tāmaki Makaurau and dated 14 October 2025, be received.

### **Carried**

*Secretarial notes: NZTA outlined the new, outcome-focused NZTA strategy and the development of evidence packs for Northland, intended to support the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and Long-Term Plan (LTP) processes. Feedback on these packs is welcomed.*

*Key national initiatives include improvements to the One Network Framework, state highway investment proposals, and the rollout of the national ticketing solution, which will reach Northland by 2027.*

*Safety remains a national priority, with school speed limits, intersection upgrades, and community initiatives underway. In Northland, productivity improvements, resilience, and safety dominate investment, with major corridor projects progressing.*

*Council members raised the importance of recognising hapū and iwi as partners in transport planning. NZTA confirmed ongoing engagement and the value of their partnership, noting they are not itemised in every report.*

*The evidence packs are designed as living documents, updated with new data and feedback, and are intended to provide consistent analysis for prioritizing regional transport interventions.*

## **KiwiRail Update (Item 7.4)**

**Report from Eric Hennephof, KiwiRail - Programme Director Northland**

**Moved (Carr/ Blackwell)**

That the report 'KiwiRail Update' by Eric Hennephof, KiwiRail - Programme Director Northland and dated 24 November 2025, be received.

**Carried**

*Secretarial notes: The reference design for the rail project was made available to interested parties, with 57 responses received. An expression of interest is open for two non-binding options: build only, and design-build-finance, closing in February. The Interior Yard upgrade has been completed, with the system performing well during heavy rain and successfully preventing floodwaters from entering the town. Ecological surveys and cultural impact assessments are underway for the Marsden Point rail link, with the first change of designation approved by WDC and further designation processes ongoing. Major culvert repairs are scheduled during the Christmas block of line, with ongoing minor upgrades to improve the resilience of the North Auckland Line.*

## **Regional Road Safety Report (Item 7.5)**

**Report from Nicole Cauty, Road Safety Project Manager and Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council**

**Moved (Blackwell/ Flower)**

That the report 'Regional Road Safety Report' by, Nicole Korach, Road Safety Project Manager, dated 24 November 2025, be received.

**Carried**

*Secretarial notes: Inspector John Fagan provided a verbal update. Police are preparing for the introduction of random oral fluid testing for drugs, expected to commence in the district around March 2026 and reported that efforts are currently focussed on speed and intoxication, with secondary attention to seat belts and distractions*

## **Northland Infrastructure Plan – Update (Item 7.6)**

**Report from Darryl Jones, Economist**

**Moved (Williams/ Blackwell)**

That the report 'Northland Infrastructure Plan – Update' by Darryl Jones, Economist and dated 24 November 2025, be received.

**Carried**

*Secretarial notes: The development of the Northland Infrastructure Plan, its objectives, integration with other strategies were presented.*

*The regional infrastructure plan initiative arose from the Northland Forward Together workshop, aiming to integrate infrastructure planning across councils and align priorities for advocacy and funding.*

*Engagement with councils, NZTA, KiwiRail, and other sectors has confirmed the value of a regional plan to provide a consistent narrative for government and internal decision-making.*

*The plan focuses on enhancing regional prosperity, connectivity, resilience, and sustainable investment, with attention to freight, housing, and the role of hapū in economic development.*

*The governance framework for the plan is still being determined, with the current Joint Regional Economic Development Committee providing oversight. Integration with the Regional Transport Plan and other strategies is a priority to avoid duplication and ensure alignment.*

*The Chair reminded attendees about the statutory responsibilities of the RTC with regard to prioritisation of land transport. RTC members highlighted the need to connect various strategies and address gaps, particularly in housing, workforce, and multi-sector collaboration. The plan will undergo further engagement and consultation in the coming year.*

## **Regional Transport Infrastructure Resilience Study - Update (Item 7.7)**

**Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator**

### **Moved (Court/ Carr)**

That the report 'Regional Transport Infrastructure Resilience Study - Update' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator and dated 18 November 2025, be received.

### **Carried**

*Secretarial notes: The study compiles risk assessments for over 2,300 road sections, integrates hazard mapping, and aims to inform prioritization and funding decisions for resilience projects. The study consolidates previous resilience assessments from multiple agencies into a single regional overview, rating each road section and structure (bridges, culverts) by risk level and mapping vulnerabilities to hazards such as flooding and sea level rise. The resulting database and maps will support the RTC in making informed decisions and provide a robust business case for funding applications to NZTA.*

*Chairman noted the complexity and extensive scope of the study, the need to focus on critical routes, and the importance of coordinating with other regional infrastructure planning efforts to avoid duplication and ensure timely delivery.*

### **Actions:**

**GM Community Resilience to forward the draft WSP Natural Hazards Resilience Assessment Phase 2 report to RTC Members and Alternates**

## **Draft Regional Public Transport Plan (Item 7.8)**

**Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator**

### **Moved (Flower/ Williams)**

That the report 'Draft Regional Public Transport Plan' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator and dated 18 November 2025, be received.

**Carried**

*Secretarial notes: Chairman raised concerns about low patronage on some bus routes and emphasized the need for data on usage and costs to inform decisions about continuing or modifying services (focused on Hokianga Link and Mid North) It was noted that the Hokianga Link operates 2-days per week, Mid North – 3 days per week and Far North – daily. It was noted that all decisions relating to changes to services lie with the Northern Regional Council.*

**Whakamutunga (Conclusion)**

The meeting concluded at 3pm.