

**Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public
Transport Working Party
Tuesday 4 April 2023 at 1.00pm**

AGENDA

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Agenda

Meeting to be held in the Council Chambers, Water Street, Whangarei
on Tuesday 4 April 2023, commencing at 1.00pm

Recommendations contained in the agenda are NOT decisions of the meeting. Please refer to minutes for resolutions.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT WDC-NRC WHANGAREI PUBLIC TRANSPORT WORKING PARTY

Chairperson, NRC Councillor Jack Crow

NRC Councillor Rick Stolwerk

NRC Councillor Joe Carr (Ex-
Officio)

WDC Councillor Scott
McKenzie

WDC Councillor Simon Reid -
WDC Councillor

WDC Councillor Carol Peters -
WDC Councillor

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TITLE: Confirmation of Minutes - 7 February 2023


From: Erica Wade, Personal Assistant - General Manager Community Resilience

Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 24 March 2023
Group Manager/s:

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the minutes of the Whangārei Public Transport Working Party meeting held on 7 February 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record and that these be duly authenticated with the Chair's electronic signature.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Unconfirmed minutes - 7 February 2023 [↓](#) 

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party
7 February 2023

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Record of Actions

Meeting held via audio-visual link
on Tuesday 7 February 2023, commencing at 1.00pm

Tuhinga/Present:

NRC Councillor Jack Crow
WDC Councillor Scott McKenzie
WDC Councillor Simon Reid
WDC Councillor Carol Peters

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Full Meeting

NRC GM – Community Resilience, Louisa Gritt
NTA Transport Manager, Chris Powell
PA to GM – Community Resilience, Lou Hartigan

Part Meeting

NTA General Manager, Calvin Thomas (1.00 – 1.20pm)

The meeting commenced at 1.02pm.

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

1. The new NRC GM – Community resilience was introduced and there was general agreement that she would chair the meeting until Item 5.1 when the Chairperson was appointed and would then preside over the meeting.
3. Attendees to raise their hand via the audio-visual link if they wanted to address the meeting.

Ngā whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

The apologies from NRC Councillor Stolwerk, NRC Councillor Carr and NTA Roding Manager, Jeff Devine, for non-attendance were noted.

Ngā whakapuakanga/Declarations of Conflict of Interest (Item 3.0)

Members were advised to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose during the meeting.

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Noting of Minutes of 2 August 2022 (Item 4.1)

Report from Louisa Gritt, NRC Group Manager Community Resilience

The minutes of the Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party meeting held on 2 August 2022 were noted.

Nomination of Chair (Item 5.1)

Report from Louisa Gritt, NRC Group Manager Community Resilience

Councillor Peters moved that Councillor Jack Craw be appointed Chair of the Working Party. The nomination had been previously endorsed by Councillor Rick Stolwerk via e-mail. With no further nominations forthcoming, and all members in favour of the nomination, Cr Jack Craw was elected unopposed to the position of Chair.

Due to Councillor Craw having technical issues, the NRC GM – Community Resilience continued to chair the meeting (noting that Councillor Craw would chair future meetings).

Overall progress on doubling bus frequency (Item 5.2)

Report from Councillor Jack Craw

An update was provided regarding the progress on doubling of bus frequency.

It was noted that there was a critical shortage of drivers and there was currently a recruitment drive for bus drivers including overseas recruitment.

ACTION:

The NTA Transport Manager to suggest to bus companies that during the recruitment process they should highlight the advantages of living in Northland (for example the cost of housing). In addition to suggest that bus companies consider recruiting students as bus drivers.

WDC progress on Kamo Road bus lane (Item 5.3)

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance

It was questioned whether there was viability for a Transit 2 lane (T2), not just a bus lane.

ACTION:

- Members are to forward the information they required to the NRC GM – Community Resilience and the NTA Roading Manager to provide an update on the Kamo bus lane at the next meeting (including reassurance for completion by 1 July 2023).

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Provision of legal opinion on responsibility for school children on non-school provided buses (Item 5.4)

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance

ACTION:

- The NTA Transport Manager to ensure that the legal opinion that had previously been sought regarding the responsibilities for untoward behaviour on buses was provided at the next working party meeting.

General matters for next agenda

Conversation with Ministry of Education about their criteria for collecting children in rural areas noting the absence of footpaths on rural roads.

Status update on the Maunu Road priority bus lane given WDC is to receive \$3.3m from the government's Climate Emergency Response Fund.

Consider lobbying the Minister of Transport to continue the reduced public transport and reduced fares on buses to the end of the year, rather than 1 July 2023 as recently advised.

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 1.55pm

TITLE: **Receipt of Action Sheet**

From: Erica Wade, Personal Assistant - General Manager Community Resilience

Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 24 March 2023
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to enable the meeting to receive the current action sheet.

Nga mahi tutohutia / Recommendation

That the action sheet be received.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Action Sheet [!\[\]\(d0262bbe9d2356661a2e89321dfcc781_img.jpg\) !\[\]\(8572950e410320d7dd023da827ff014d_img.jpg\)](#)

Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Action Sheet						06.03.2023
1	7-Feb-23	Overall progress on doubling bus frequency	The NTA Transport Manager to suggest to bus companies that during the recruitment process they should highlight the advantages of living in Northland (for example the cost of housing). In addition to suggest that bus companies consider recruiting students as bus drivers	Chris Powell	In Progress	
2	7-Feb-23	WDC progress on Kamo Road bus lane	Members are to forward the information they required to the NRC GM – Community Resilience and the NTA Roding Manager to provide an update on the Kamo bus lane at the next meeting (including reassurance for completion by 1 July 2023)	Members and Louisa Gritt	In Progress	
3	7-Feb-23	Provision of legal opinion on responsility for school children on non-school provided business	The NTA Transport Manager to ensure that the legal opinion that had previously been sought regarding the responsibilities for untoward behaviour on buses was provided at the next working party meeting	Chris Powell	In Progress	

TITLE: Confirmation of election of the Chair

From: Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance

Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 24 March 2023
Group Manager/s:

Executive summary/Whakarāpopototanga

This paper is to seek formal confirmation that Northland Regional Councillor Jack Craw, be appointed as Chairman of the Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Whangarei Public Transport Working Party.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the report 'Confirmation of election of the Chair' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and dated 14 March 2023, be received.
2. That Councillor Jack Craw be formally elected as Chairman of the Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Whangarei Public Transport Working Party

Options

No.	Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	Formally elect a chairperson for the Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Whangarei Public Transport Working Party.	Allow for a formalised decision-making process for the Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Whangarei Public Transport Working Party.	None
2	Do not formally elect a chairperson for the Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Whangarei Public Transport Working Party.	None	There is no formalised decision-making process for the Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Whangarei Public Transport Working Party.

The staff's recommended option is Option 1

Considerations

1. Climate Impact

There is no identifiable climatic impact regarding this appointment.

2. Environmental Impact

There are no environmental impacts identified at this time.

3. Community views

The views of the community are not required in this instance.

4. Māori impact statement

There is no identifiable impact to Māori.

5. Financial implications

There are no financial implications identified.

6. Implementation issues

There are no implementation issues identified.

7. Significance and engagement

There are no identifiable significance and engagement risks related to this appointment.

8. Policy, risk management and legislative compliance

There is no policy, risk management or engagement issues identified.

Background/Tuhinga

At the 7 February 2023 Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Whangarei Public Transport Working Party meeting, nominations were called for a chairperson for the working party.

There was unanimous agreement that Councillor Jack Craw be requested to accept nomination of this position. No other names were put forward for consideration.

Councillor Craw accepted the nomination.

However, as this meeting was held via teleconference, this nomination cannot be formally adopted.

An in-person meeting is required to ratify this nomination.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Nil

TITLE: CityLink Bus Service - Update

From: Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance

Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 24 March 2023
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This report serves to update the Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party on what has occurred in regard to the CityLink Bus Service since the last meeting of 7 February 2023.

Chris Powell Transport Manager and Jeff Devine Strategy and Planning Manager, Northland Transportation Alliance, will be present at the meeting to answer any questions.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the report 'CityLink Bus Service – Update' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and dated 20 March 2023, be received.

Background/Tuhinga

CITYLINK BUS SERVICE STATISTICS FOR FEBRUARY 2023 AND 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR

Bus Link stats for February 2023 (revenue ex GST)	Actual	Budget	Variance	Year/Date Actual	Year/Date Budgeted	Variance
CityLink Passengers	27,814	22,990	4,824	221,697	211,634	10,063
CityLink Revenue	\$19,078	\$29,657	-\$10,579	\$271,100	\$273,008	-\$1,908
Bream Bay Link Passengers	42	24	18	416	212	204
Bream Bay Link Revenue	\$143	\$173	-\$30	\$1,936	\$1,526	\$410
Hikurangi Link Passengers	16	24	-8	137	204	-67
Hikurangi Link Revenue	\$24	\$63	-\$39	\$236	\$532	-\$296

Cyclone Gabrielle

During the week of 13 – 17 February 2023, all the rural contracted Link Bus Services were severely impacted by the closure of roads due to storm damage incurred. This in turn negatively impacted on

the number of passengers carried. Normal services resumed operation on Monday 20 February 2023. In addition, the Ministry of Education approved the closure of several schools in the region. For the Whangarei Link Service, operations were halted from 1pm 13 February 2023 and no services ran on 14 February 2023.

Kamo/Tikipunga Bus Service – Extension to Totora Park

A request has been received from the Bupa Totora Gardens Retirement Village for a bus service into Totora Park which will provide public transport to the local and retirement village residents.

A copy of this request has also been sent to various district, regional and national elected representatives.

Staff have and will continue to undertake feasibility and viability studies into potential and new growth areas.

It is important to note that for a new service to be introduced, there are a number of criteria that need to be met. For Totora Park, these include: -

- Demand – Is there sufficient demand to make the service work and not be a “nice to have in case” operation? Do most or all homes have one or more cars on the premises. This is an indication of potential low patronage.
- What timetable needs to be operated?
- Route to be operated – Can the existing or proposed road network safely accommodate the buses and stops needed?
- Is there sufficient national and local share funding available to cover costs of operation and infrastructure (bus stop shelters etc.)? Waka Kotahi have confirmed that under the present severe shortage of national funding available, there is very little chance new projects will be funded.
- If the requested service can be covered by an existing operator, are there sufficient buses and drivers available? Under the present environment, there is very little chance of finding drivers for this service as the operator is still trying source 6 new drivers for the proposed scholar services. These drivers have yet to be found. See section titled National Bus Driver Shortage.

Under the present restricted funding and driver shortage regime, staff cannot confirm if and when this request could be met.

National Bus Driver Shortage

The Northland Regional Council (NRC) has held ongoing discussion with the CityLink operator in regard to their driver shortage problem.

The recommendations put forward in previous meetings by the Working Party were put forward.

In addition, the NRC is assisting the operator with the following initiatives: -

1. Radio advertising for Whangarei and Dargaville radio stations.
2. Also looking ethnic radio stations as well
3. Letterbox drops.

4. Having a stall at local markets giving people who are interested the brief on working in the bus industry and what services are offered.
5. Meetings with Ministry of Social Development.
6. Operator “Open Day” the public can get an insight into the bus company.
7. Marae Visits
8. School Newsletters
9. Flyers/Posters for Bowling Clubs, RSA, retirement villages
10. Investigating the possibility of using “bus back advertising” for drivers.
11. Use of the “Bus Destination Signs” on the front of bus advertising for drivers when Citylink bus is not in service.
12. “Operator’s Employee Referral Program” where \$1,000 is offered to an employee for bringing someone on new and they stay for an agreed amount of time.
13. Advertising at the local iSites – Visitors may have family or friends based in Whangarei or across Northland who could help spread the message.
14. Advertising in the Coffee Club Paper.

Unfortunately, this matter is far from resolved with aggressive passenger behaviour being the number one reason given for not wanting to drive buses. A week prior to the compilation of this report, a bus driver was stabbed in Auckland. Some driver representative bodies have indicated that continuation of such behaviour could result in industrial action being taken.

Drivers Wages

The NRC is presently in discussion with the operators in regard to the increasing driver wages in accordance with the governments mandate.

Whilst financial provision has been made for this, the NRC was awaiting feedback from the operator for close on a year. The delay was caused when the company was sold, and this issue had to be discussed with the new owners.

Whilst it is hoped that the proposed increase in wages will attract new drivers, it does not help with the recruitment from outside the country as bus drivers are not recognised as essential workers under the present immigration criteria.

Antisocial Behavior on the CityLink Buses

Graffitiing, burning and cutting of seats are a continuing occurrence.

Following requests from the Chairman of the the Joint WDC-NRC Whangārei Public Transport Working Party, formal written legal advice was obtained in regard to two issues pertaining to the behaviour of school children and/or minors on the CityLink buses. These are: -

1. Who is legally responsible for the behaviour of a school child and/or minor on any CityLink bus.
2. Can a school child and/or minor be removed/suspended/trespassed from a CityLink bus.

Antisocial and aggressive behaviour continues at the Rose Street Bus Terminus.

During the month of February 2023, two social media postings were discovered calling for participants to be involved in organized fights. One posting identified the bus terminus as the proposed site. The police were notified of both instances. Fortunately, neither eventuated.

The Northland Regional Council has been approached by the security company looking after the Rose Street office stating that a female guard had been assaulted by young people at the rank.

This occurrence along with the two social media posting and the continuing instances of antisocial behaviour during school terms has resulted in the security guards being too afraid to work alone. The company is now having to double the number of guards during the afternoon peak periods.

Total Mobility (TM)

TOTAL MOBILITY STATISTICS FOR FEBRUARY 2023 AND 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR

	Total Clients	Monthly Actual Expend	Monthly Budgeted Expend	Monthly Variance	Year/Date Actual Expend	Year/Date Budgeted Expend	Annual Variance
February 2023	1340	\$25,205	\$25,000	-\$205	\$209,019	\$175,000	-\$34,019

Increase in Total Mobility Travel.

With the introduction of the half price fares on the Total Mobility Scheme nationally, there has been a marked increase in the number of clients signing up to the Scheme and a greater increase in the number of trips being undertaken.

It must be remembered that the Scheme originally offered a 50% subsidised discount for each trip undertaken by a registered client utilising an approved service provider. The subsidised portion was covered by Waka Kotahi @ 60% and the Whangarei District Council (WDC) @ 40%.

When the government introduced the half fare initiative during the Covid outbreak, it effectively meant that the 50% paid by the client was now halved to 25% and the subsidy portion increased to 75%.

Whilst Waka Kotahi will cover the additional 25%, the resultant and continued uptake in the use of the Scheme will result in the budget being exceeded.

Staff are currently working on the expected overrun and are in discussion with the WDC and Waka Kotahi on how this overrun will be covered.

National Taxi Driver Shortage

In recent meetings with Total Mobility Service Providers (taxi companies) it would appear that the driver shortage has now extended to the taxi industry nationally.

Again, antisocial behaviour and in some cases threats of physical violence by passengers has been given as the number one reason.

This is obviously a matter of concern particularly if the Scheme is faced with the scenario of increasing client usage and decreasing taxi numbers.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Nil

TITLE: Progress on bus lanes

From: Jeffrey Devine, Northland Transport Alliance - Strategy & Planning Manager

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 24 March 2023

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This report is provided to update the Committee on the progress of the Kamo Bus Lane project.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the report 'Progress on bus lanes' by Jeffrey Devine, Northland Transport Alliance - Strategy & Planning Manager and dated 24 March 2023, be received.

Background/Tuhinga

Bus priority / Transit lanes in Whangarei, are being considered for several of the main bus routes in Whangarei. These lanes would be created by reallocating existing road space to create an additional lane. This would be achieved by having a clearway (no parking period) for parked vehicles during the peak periods when the lane is operating. During non-peak periods, the lane would revert back to a parking lane. These lanes would either be "bus only" lanes or transit lanes (e.g., T2 or T3 lanes) which also enable cars carrying two people for a T2 lane or three people for a T3 lane to use them. For simplicity we have called these lanes bus priority lanes because this is the main objective of these lanes.

The initial project would consist of a primarily city-bound bus priority lane which would enable commuters on their way to work to "jump the queue" and provide a time advantage over private vehicles. City-bound lanes are being targeted because the time pressures during the morning peak when people are trying to get to work on time are higher than when they are coming home at night. There is insufficient road space in many parts of the corridors for the bus priority lanes to operate in both the city-bound and out-bound directions.

It is proposed that the bus priority lanes operate between 6:30am and 9:30am on weekdays.

Bus lanes are currently being planned for the following routes:

- Bank Street / Kamo Road (Kamo Bus Route)
- Riverside Drive (Onerahi Bus Route)
- SH14 and Maunu Road (Manu Bus Route)

The intention is to start with the Bank Street / Kamo Road route because this route currently has a lot of congestion and also has a separate cycle facility for cyclists to use (the Kamo Shared Path). If this project is successful this would become permanent, and trials rolled out on the other two routes. Any "lessons-learnt" from the Bank Street / Kamo Road route would be used to fine tune the other routes. The SH14 and Maunu Road route would be the last of the three routes to be implemented, because there is currently no off-road cycle path to Maunu.

There would need to be a significant publicity campaign associated with this project to advise the public and businesses of these changes and to promote the use of buses on these routes. This would need to be combined with enforcement of the clearways on these routes.

In the long term, bus priority lanes will be provided in both directions as part of the future 4-laning of these routes.

Bus Services

To maximise the up-take in bus passengers using the Bus Lanes, it is also proposed to increase the frequency of buses on these bus priority lane routes. The Kamo and Onerahi Bus routes currently have buses every half hour during the peak periods and one or two hour buses during non-peak periods. The Maunu Bus route has a bus every hour in the peak and non-peak periods.

The intention is to increase the number of buses to enable a 15 minute frequency during peak periods and 30 minute frequency during non-peak periods. During peak periods, this would provide a more attractive service offering and reduce people's need to rely on the bus timetable because they know the longest that they would wait is 15 minutes.

The combination of bus priority lanes, increased number of buses on these routes and additional promotion of these services should result in a significant increase in patronage and reduction in private vehicles contributing to congestion on these routes.

Funding


The Whangarei District Council provided funding in the 2024-27 LTP for the installation of Bus lanes on Whangarei priority routes. The NRC also provide funding in the LTP for the associated increase in bus services. The WDC funding is subject to Waka Kotahi NZTA subsidy and project approval and NZTA require Council to complete a Business Case to justify the project funding. That business case is currently being completed in conjunction with NZTA staff and is due to be completed by May 2023 following some delays due to COVID.


In February NZTA, confirmed Climate Emergency Relief Funding (CERF) for the construction of the Kamo Bus priority Lane. The CERF funding is provided at a 100% subsidy rate for Council. Following this announcement Council's consultants have commenced on the detailed design for construction phase of these works as well as continuing with completing the Business Case which will be required for funding the following stages of the project.

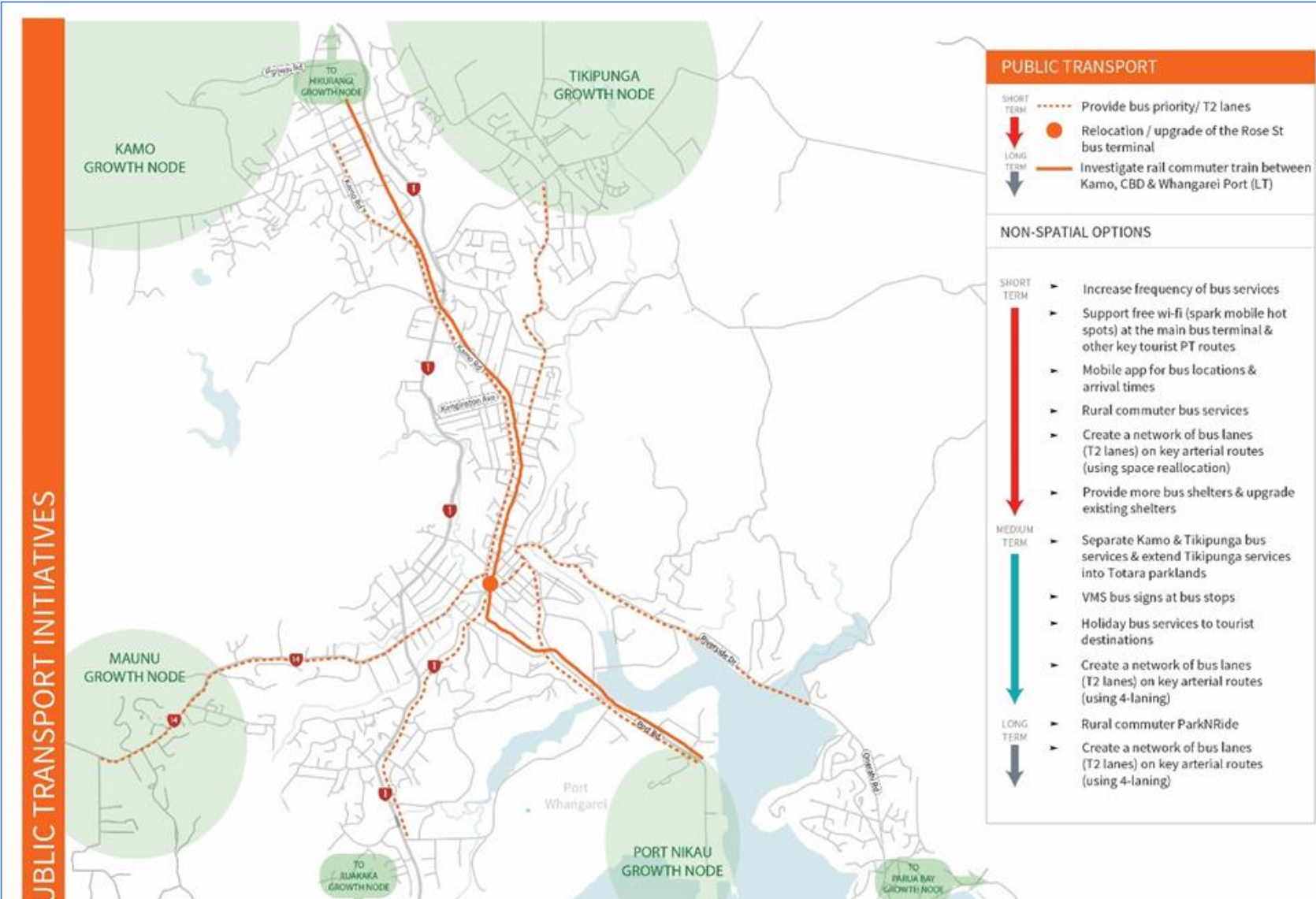
It is anticipated the construction phase of the Kamo Bus lane project will commence in August 2023.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

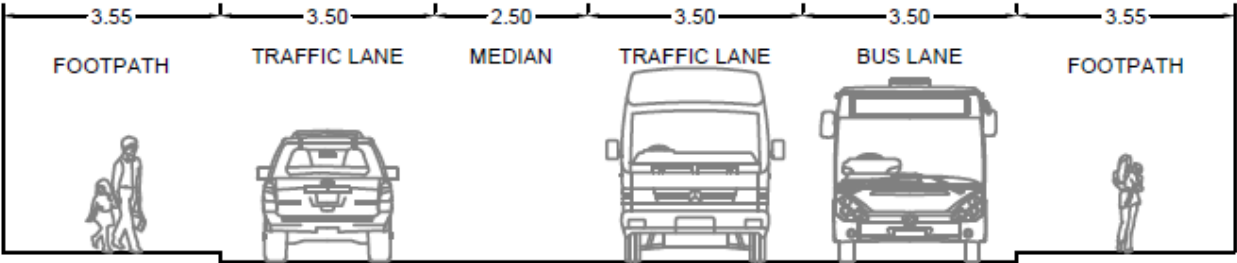
Attachment 1: Appendix 1: Bus lane trial [↓](#) 

Attachment 2: Appendix 2: Bus lane trial [↓](#) 

Attachment 3: Appendix 3: Bus lane trial [↓](#) 

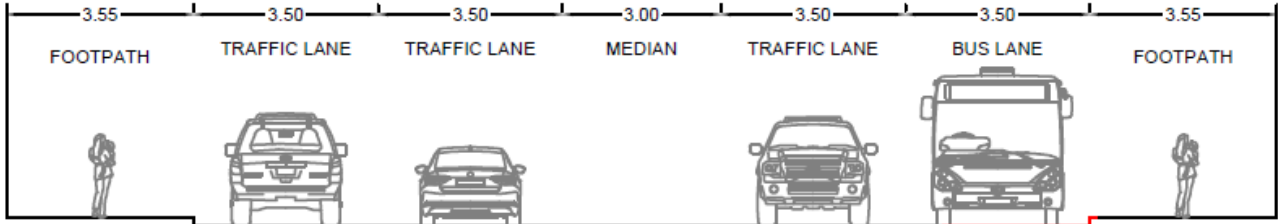


KAMO RD (MAINS AVE - SIMONS ST)

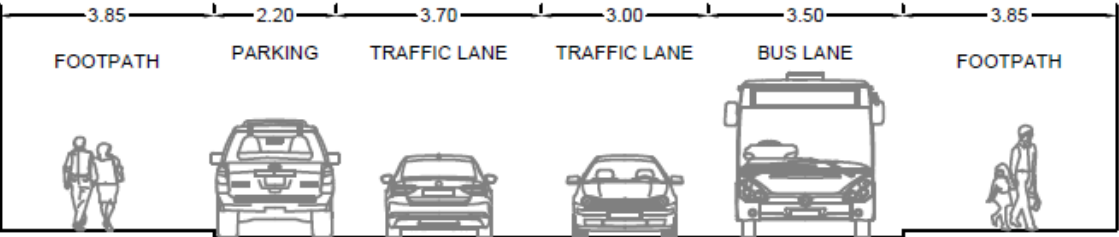


KAMO RD (KENSINGTON AVE - MAINS AVE)

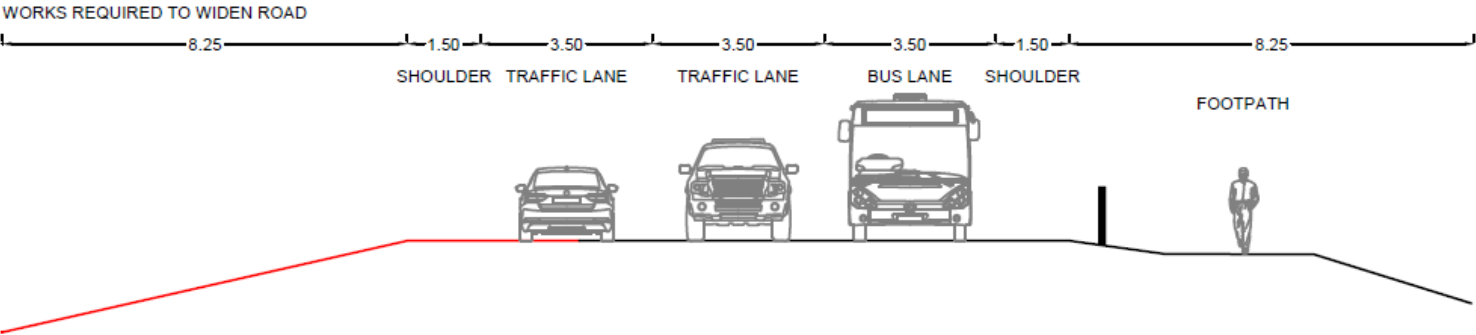
Check on site, road width measured off aerial ~16.7m WORKS REQUIRED



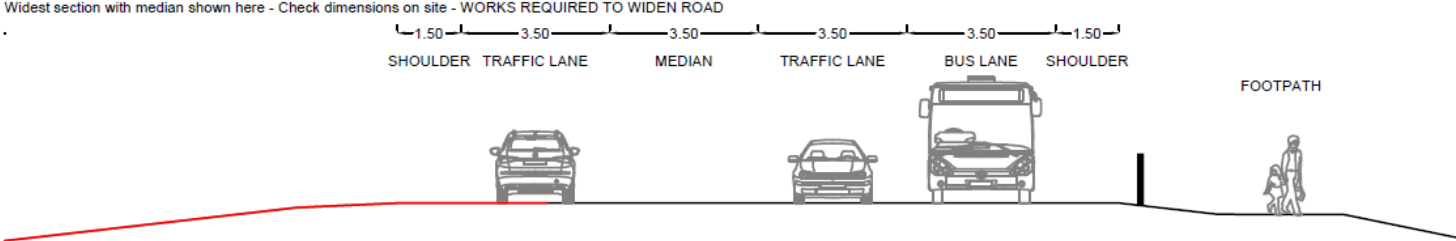
KAMO RD (GRAHAM ST - KENSINGTON AVE)



RIVERSIDE DR (S) (AWAROA RIVER RD - ONERHAI RD (CLOTWORTHY BR))



RIVERSIDE DR (S) (START OF SLIP LANE - MACKESY RD)



RIVERSIDE DR (S) (MACKESY RD - BROOK RD)

