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Ministry of Transport
Wellington

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Submission: Travel Demand in New Zealand 2050 Long-term Insights briefing topic

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Long-term briefing topic, 'Travel demand in New Zealand 2050'.

The Kāpiti Coast district has grown significantly over the last 30 years and is expected to continue to grow as its proximity to Wellington, lifestyle offering, and more affordable housing options continue to attract residents and businesses to the area.

Improved roading and rail connections to parts of the district have enabled this growth and are also creating greater needs for connections to core services both locally and regionally. As we grow the nature of growth is also changing across parts of the district as we see more intensified housing emerging – alongside ongoing demand for greenfield growth.

In 2022 Council completed its growth strategy *Te tupu pai, Growing Well*. The Strategy identified the need for, and dependency on, effective transport solutions as part of an overall approach for growing well. Understanding future changes in travel demand and technology are important to help us plan, balance and shape of our district's urban form with how we live, and to achieve efficiency in our infrastructure.

Current challenges and opportunities for the Kāpiti Coast District

Census 2023 has the Kāpiti Coast's population as 57,422, increasing to 80,924 by 2054. From the historical growth patterns across the district has evolved a strong need for, and dependence on, cars for getting about.

Paraparaumu / Raumati and Waikanae form the largest population centres for the district and look to the south for health, welfare, employment, and educational opportunities. This part of our district is well catered for inter-regional travel, through the recent completion of

the Transmission Gully motorway and Kāpiti expressway. This part of the district also has frequent rail services through to Wellington, and bus services serving the urban area.

However, where inter-regional connections are good, connections in and across the urban areas are ineffective, and at times show some capacity issues – with areas of peak congestion experienced around Kāpiti Road – and scheduling issues, with train and bus services with poorly matched timetabling.

In contrast, Ōtaki sits at the northern end of the District and Wellington Region. While Ōtaki access has recently improved, through the completed Peka Peka to Ōtaki Expressway, it is underserved and has poor public transport connections, both inter-regionally to the north or intra-district, to the south. This is particularly important, as most social services for the southern part of the district are Wellington based, whereas the administration for most of the social services supporting Ōtaki residents are located northwards, based in Levin or centred in Palmerston North.

As Ōtaki sits on the edge of the Greater Wellington Regional area, it effectively has no public transport options. Thus, access to health, welfare, employment and educational opportunities are in Levin, 20kms to the north, or south, 23kms, in Paraparaumu. Access to these services is therefore almost entirely dependent on access to a car. Councils 2022 Housing Needs Assessment identified that for many in Ōtaki, economically a low decile community, it is not an option to not own a car.

Ōtaki has been identified as one of seven Priority Development Area's across the Horowhenua – Wellington – Wairarapa in the Wellington Regional Future Development Strategy. The dynamic between expected growth and constrained access, means that while Ōtaki's is subject to current and future growth expectations, residents don't have the same level of access to core social services available elsewhere in the district or in the region. The potential for on-demand services to be used in Ōtaki to provide access to core service has been an option identified in discussions with partner agencies.

Reflecting these circumstances, two areas we would be particularly interested in seeing modelled is, changing demands for transport, and future potential modes and options that:

- Provide options for effective transport connections and public transport services in locations across administrative boundaries, where densities might not be currently feasible to support traditional scheduled services, and
- the potential for on-demand, smaller networks across spatial areas.

Welcome the opportunity for a Kapiti Coast District Case Study

We would welcome and support a potential opportunity to work with the Ministry of Transport on a potential case study for our area as part of your modelling work. This could apply and illustrate some of the dynamics, challenges and opportunities faced on the Kāpiti Coast, as outlined above, and which are reflected in similar circumstances by other growing provincial locations around the country.

Question 1: Do you agree that 'travel demand in New Zealand in 2050' is a worthwhile topic for the Ministry's LTIB?

Yes, we agree that travel demand in New Zealand is an important topic that can help inform how councils and government plan and invest to support current and future transport needs.

Under the Wellington Regional Future Development Strategy, Paraparaumu and Ōtaki are significant growth hubs as part of the western growth corridor. For the Kāpiti district, population and business growth and demographic change over the next 30 years will see the district grow considerably and change from being predominantly a dormitory suburb of Wellington, to having much larger and stronger internal business and employment markets.

More services are likely to be available within the district including for health and education. Consequently, travel demand will change significantly both in volume and type, with intra-district travel likely to increase significantly.

Growth is also planned for Levin, just north of our boundary. This will create a changing dynamic between Ōtaki and Levin that will need to be adequately serviced with public transport links, by rail or buses or on-demand services.

Our District is also experiencing a change in development trends and typologies. Traditionally the majority of development within our district was subdivisions for detached single dwellings. Recently, medium density and townhouse development applications are making up a larger portion of the applications received and housing products on the market.

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 directed Council's to remove minimum car parking requirements from District Plans. Although most applications received still propose some car parking the ratio per residential unit and space within developments for car parking has reduced. While this may not be currently evident, it is expected that this trend will impact travel demand in the future – stressing the need for further development of local public transport services and safe walking and cycling options.

Question 2: Do you agree that a time horizon of 25 years is appropriate?

No. We support the use of a 30-year timeframe for this work. This would provide alignment with strategic planning and investment processes councils undertake and would help align the consideration of findings into the review and implementation of those processes. For the Kāpiti Coast District Council this includes:

- the Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua Future Development Strategy.
- our growth strategy, Te tupu pai, Growing Well.
- Councils Infrastructure strategy 2024–54 setting out our approach to managing transport, stormwater, water supply, wastewater and coastal assets for the next 30 years.

Question 3: Do you agree that the scope should be limited to demand for land-based transport?

We support the proposed focus on land-based transport providing this is envisioned broadly and not just focused on current transport modes. We would like to see opportunities explored that include:

- on-demand public transport services (with and without drivers),
- enhanced personal mobility vehicles (e-bikes, scooters, mobility scooters),

- transport modes that are ancillary to land transport, but which could support it. For example:
    - using Pilotless air taxis to carry people medium distances (eg 100 to 200kms), providing for faster travel, and less state highway congestion,
    - air borne drone delivery vehicles to deliver small freight articles (instead of road-based couriers),
    - self-driven trackless trams for high frequency commutes on high user routes.

Considering other forms of transport in the model will also require rethinking the carriageways needed to support them, and the priority they might be given in funding and delivery.

Question 4: Which drivers and trends are likely to have the most direct influence on demand for land-based transport over the next 25 years? What data and information about those drivers and trends should we draw on to create a baseline scenario for 2050?

The drivers and trends likely to have the most direct influence on demand for land-based transport over the next 25 years include:

- population growth: the number of people and where they reside and where they frequently and habitually travel to secondary accommodation (ie the 'bach'),
- demographic change: the impact of increasing older cohorts who may not be as independently mobile, but who need to access services and amenities,
- climate change: the impact and resiliency of networks to sea level rise and increased weather events affecting network availability (permanently and / or temporarily), including supporting / not supporting particular transport modes,
- funding and financing: the ongoing ability of society as a whole and local communities in particular, to fund / finance increasingly expensive new transport delivery options, and to maintain existing ones (particularly considering climate change).
- economic profiles:
    - impact of population growth in cohorts that are economically challenged, and the impact this has on their transport mode choice and access to health, welfare, employment, education services and amenities and subsequent economic wellbeing,
    - congestion charging and the financial impacts of regressive use charges where public transport options are not readily available
- land-use and patterns of settlement: where people live, the density of habitation, and how that supports different transport modes, which in turn supports access opportunities,
- transport technology:
    - the use and adaptation of current technologies used by people or for freight as outlined in question 3 above, and
    - supporting technologies for traffic management, ticketing, road and scheduling information, and funding collection and congestion charging,
- disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence, and Smart Cities technology:

    - their impact on employment, and the need to physically ‘go’ to work or to physical places for services and amenities (eg tele-medicine),
    - their use to manage transport options and traffic flows, creating greater network efficiency,
- changes in working arrangements: with increasing focus on life/work balance and flexible working arrangements, and associated changes to commuting behaviours and destinations.

Question 5: Given uncertainty around the pace, scale and type of technological advancement, how should our analysis of future scenarios factor in technology?

While we may not know exactly what technology may emerge, we can identify technological changes that could be developed to respond to particular issues/problem in the current and near-future transport ecosystem.

Although confidence cannot be provided, understanding the potential impact and sensitivity of changes or influencing factors is important. This will help understanding of dependencies and interrelationships between factors modelled, to support ongoing planning and investment work.

The key to this modelling, is to envisage the issue/problem, and probability of a technological solution.

Question 6: If we model alternative scenarios for 2050, which key assumptions do you think we should alter from a baseline scenario? (For example, assumptions about overall population growth, assumptions about geographic population distribution etc.)

Population assumptions and distribution are two baseline assumptions to be varied against the other factors. Additionally, assumptions around:

- the density of our cities and towns,
- health (eg will there be a significant change in the mental capacity/physical ability of our aging population to stay independently mobile),
- the distribution of health and care facilities,
- operating in an increasingly online world, and changes to services such as delivering educational opportunities across all age cohorts,
- changes in economic drivers such as our reliance on the rural sector,
- increased numbers of service industries (and more remote working),
- the economic impact of transport demand on delivery choices and charging, and
- of those choices on peoples’ transport choices and demand for services.

Alternative freight transport (eg large VTOL drones) should also be dynamically modelled as an alternative to road freight. Also, the relationship between road and rail freight needs to be dynamically modelled.

We thank you for this opportunity to present our thoughts on this subject, and would been keen to continue the conversation and to have Kapiti district used as a growth case study.

Yours sincerely

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