

Name: Councillor Ann Court

Date: February 2023

Portfolio Update: Transport

The Regional Land Transport Committee met in Whangarei on the 7th of February. The agenda and workshop papers were circulated to all elected members with the following personal commentary added:

Workshop

Affordability challenges (noted below) were again highlighted as we prepare for the 2024-2027 Regional Land Transport Plan:

- No increase to RUC (Road User Charges) and FED (Fuel Excise Levies) has been signalled
- Due to Covid and a shift to working from home more - we have been driving less so Waka Kotahi has less income
- Government subsidies at the pump have also had an adverse impact on revenue
- \$2b loan from the last National Land Transport Plan still as to be paid back. Details on this are still being worked through
- What we need to fund is increasing in scope. Rail and Coastal Shipping as well as Climate Change Adaptation and Emissions Reduction Technology as well as noise/dust, walking and cycling etc. are increasing demand on the pool
- Walking, Cycling and Public Transport are Government priorities along with emission reduction and Auckland challenges - these are the Ministers priorities and will consume a significant focus on the investment framework moving forward.
- There are heightened expectations to fund government commitments
- There is a high level of carry forwards
- Impact of weather-related events has absorbed available emergency funding
- No monies for new capital projects
- Asset base growing in scale and complexity - more to maintain and depreciate
- Clean Car Scheme impacts
- Inflation, supply chain challenges, staff shortages

All in all, it was a very sobering presentation designed to set expectations low. The Transport Committee have recommended a rewrite of the Regional Land Transport Plan with a focus on the shifting challenges we have experienced over the last three years. WIP

Agenda

The agenda predominantly focused on the procedural and legal niceties of what needs to be addressed in order to achieve legislative compliance as we head into the new triennium and a new planning cycle.

I have cut and paste the section on Government Policy Statement for your interest below as this really captures the essence of the challenge ahead.

Indicative Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024

On 13th January 2023, the Ministry of Transport released the “Indicative Strategic Priorities – Developing the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 – Engagement Paper”.

The content and implications of this public document have been covered in greater detail in a separate report to the RTC titled “Developing the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024”.

It is important at this time that the RTC members attention is drawn to the statements under the heading Prioritising Transport Investment within Available Funding on page 2 of the Indicative Strategic Priorities – Developing the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 – Engagement Paper.

These comments highlight the national problems relating to funding availability to cover the 2021/2024 funding period and to meet the funding requests for the 2024/2027 funding period.

In addition to the above, the government has made it clear that available funding will firstly be directed to those projects that lead to emissions reductions.

These projects relate to increased passenger and freight rail services, increased public transport services and increased walking and cycling facilities.

As stated in the Emissions Reduction Plan, those projects that provide best “bang for buck” will have a greater chance of being funded. The areas identified as best suited to meet this requirement are identified as Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Due to its rural nature and limited infrastructure, Northland will be unable to achieve the government's emission reduction levels as detailed in the Emissions Reduction Plan. This Includes achieving Vehicle Kilometre Travelled (VKT) reduction, which can only be achieved in the Whangarei urban area.

Road Safety

The road safety report again makes for some sobering reading.

In 2022 the Aotearoa/New Zealand deaths per 100,000 was 7.4. and Auckland was 3.2. By comparison - Te Tai Tokerau/Northland was 18.86 – Far North district was 21.68, Whangarei district was 18.1, Kaipara district was 11.03.

Conference

In October I attended the Future Roads Conference in Hamilton. My report was included in the December 15 agenda. However due to time constraints the report was not received and was not included in the extraordinary meeting the following week. I have reattached for elected member consideration.

Electrocoagulation

Last year in researching electrocoagulation I picked up that Electrocoagulation is unable to remove short carbon chain molecules with a particular focus on molecules with less than 6 carbon atoms. That got me to thinking about what is actually in the wastewater.

That was interesting. According to Google "Illicit drugs are considered to be the emerging contaminant of concern due to their toxic effect on aquatic biota and ecosystems."

With methamphetamine, codeine and morphine all detectable in biosolids and relatively stable for many years.

Electrocoagulation is most widely used for the treatment of industrial wastewater but that there is currently no information on full scale application of Electrocoagulation technology available in peer reviewed literature.

So, the question in my mind is what do we know about how or if electrocoagulation can process prescription or recreational drugs?

I put the question to the gurus who responded "The consensus is that because EC is not a widely adopted technology for municipal wastewater treatment there is a lack of information and understanding on the ability of the technology to remove these types of contaminants. Beca will be doing more research around this topic including asking their international contacts."

The following is one really interesting study into the impact of prescription hormones in wastewater altering the genetic makeup of fish...

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/03/160304092230.htm>

[Estrogen in birth control pills has a negative impact on fish](#)

The hormone ethinyl-estradiol (EE2) is an active substance in many birth control pills which affects aquatic organisms when released as waste into the water.

www.sciencedaily.com

Kerikeri Water

There has been a history of significant discoloration of Kerikeri's potable water supply. I understand this is caused by high levels of Manganese in the raw water source (Lake Waingaro).

We are advised that it is safe to drink, however, it is an unpleasant experience as the water is brown in colour and imparts a very strong bitter metallic taste.

High levels of manganese are also incompatible with other sanitary uses such as bathing and laundry. When fabrics are washed in manganese bearing water dark brown or black stains are formed due to the oxidation of the manganese.

Discoloured water may also have adverse commercial and industrial consequences.

According to Dr Google iron and manganese can be effectively removed from water using a number of pre-treatment processes at point-of-entry (POE). Treatment options may look like an oxidizer such as chlorine, air, ozone, or potassium permanganate is used as a pre-treatment to filtration. Other methods that have proven effective at reducing manganese levels in water include softening, reverse osmosis and iron/manganese filtration systems.

I am advised Ventia has commissioned a report on this matter. It is appropriate elected members and the community are advised of treatment opportunities and associated costs so that this may form part of our annual plan / long term plan considerations.

<https://www.taumataarowai.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Rules-and-standards/Taumata-Arowai-Aesthetic-Values-for-Drinking-Water-2022.pdf>

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2022/0168/latest/whole.html>

FYI The maximum acceptable levels of concentrations as established in the NZ drinking water standards at 0.4 mg/L. What are our levels?

Cyclone Gabriel

To everyone who played a part before, during and after the event. Thank You. As we move into our recovery mode, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge our amazing community. Our local authorities, emergency services, lifeline utilities, social services, Iwi, volunteer groups, government and welfare organizations, neighbourhood groups, professional bodies, the NZ Defence Force, Insurers, Waka Kotahi, Northern Transport Alliance, Ventia and those who just opened their homes for food, warm, showers, support.

Together we are stronger.