

Name: Councillor Ann Court

Date: July 2023

Portfolio Update:

The current Government Policy Statement (GPS) was due to be released last year, this was then moved to February and then June. It has now been delayed again. This is going to create significant challenges in aligning the Far North's programme to the GPS's priorities and funding buckets.

Due to the establishment of the Transport Committee, it has been agreed that the elected member monthly portfolio meetings will cease with all reports now going directly to the committee.

The calibre of the reports has been outstanding and our position is that our staff and contractors have been doing a satisfactory job within their current funding constraints and network challenges.

BRYNDERWYNS:

Back in 2017 alternative routes for the Brynderwys were looked at as part of 'Connecting Northland'. This study identified nine possible routes which were then whittled down to two as part of the business case. This connection is a critical freight and resilience route.

It is hoped the new GPS will be a better fit for the delivery of these kinds of projects.

There is a current misalignment with expectations there will be a driveable route within a decade. Funding for this project has not been included in the current 10-year NLTP, albeit funding has been recently approved to update the 2017 business case.

If there is likely to be a considerable gap between project scope and delivery, we will need to ensure more resilience is built into the local network.

I have attached a copy of the June Whangarei to Dome Valley Resilience Strategic Response Investment Logic Map as an FYI.

Waka Kotahi Funding

Waka Kotahi is expected to draw down the final \$1 billion of the \$2 billion Government loan to enable it to deliver on the 2021-24 National Land Transport Plan. Critically this is a loan not a grant so it needs to be paid back.

The implications of this on the future deliverability of work programmes and the resilience of the network have not been considered and should be of real concern to those who have the manage the network on a daily basis.

Fixed Speed Cameras:

The Land Transport (Road Safety) Amendment Bill will bring in new laws related to speed cameras as well as new laws for impounding vehicles.

In relation to speed cameras, the Bill introduces legislation allowing for the use of 'point-to-point' average speed cameras (which are cameras installed at the start and end of a long section of road) these cameras calculate your average speed over the distance.

The Bill also allows for infringement notices to be sent to digital addresses e.g.: your email.

One new camera has been installed on SHW 1 between Taumatamakuku and Kawakawa.

Impounding Vehicles

The same bill also proposes to stiffen penalties for fleeing drivers by lengthening the impoundment period from 28 days to 6 months.

There is some commentary in the legislation that refers to vehicles with 'severe damage' and 'converting vehicles'.

Some concern has been expressed that the Bill as drafted may release unroadworthy vehicles onto the network at the time of their release. Storage operators have provided evidence that are legally required to release these vehicles at the end of the impoundment period noting that some are in dangerous condition with bald tyres, faulty brakes, out of WOF, dangerous suspensions and protruding exhaust pipes.

Vehicle Emission Standards

The Ministry of Transport is consulting on stronger vehicle emission standards to address pollutants other than CO2. The consultation document seeks to require vehicles entering the fleet to emit much lower amounts of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter as well as CO2. These new standards will apply to both new and used vehicles.

Budget 2023

\$71 billion for infrastructure over the next five years under the new National Infrastructure Plan and \$6 billion to make infrastructure more resilient over the next four years under the new National Resilience Plan. Whilst the funding is welcome it is more of a collation of existing funding commitments rather than additional funding.

The National Resilience Plan is unsurprisingly focussed on repairing and rebuilding infrastructure in regions hit by the 2023 weather events. Most of the funding will go to roads but it has also been earmarked for rail, local infrastructure, communications and electricity transmission.

NZ UP-Grade Programme

\$1 billion has been added to the NZ UP-Grade Programme. Members recalling that our Northland to Auckland four laning formed part of this package before it was removed by the Minister in the first tranche of cost overruns and reprioritization.

Although I took a Notice of Motion at the time seeking to judicially review the Ministers decision to arbitrarily cancel this project - the legal opinion sought by WDC was that the Minister has absolute unfettered powers to do as he or she wished at the time as this project sat aside from the National Land Transport Plan.

Northland Road Safety Meeting

Quarterly meetings so nothing to report this month.

Disability Action Group

No meeting this period.

Te Puawaitanga

No meetings have been held this period. A casual drive by suggests the weather has finally beaten us with site works appearing to have been suspended until spring.

Liquor Licensing

Year to date 304 applications have been received. Training is continuing online with regular webinars and a two-day session with an external facilitator scheduled for 27 and 28 July.

Hearings

Two further opposed Managers Certificate Applications were heard by way of a public hearing on the 19th of June. Both were granted.

Two new opposed applications have been received. Hearings will be scheduled in due course.

Nautipenguin Limited is set down for the 21st.

Regional Land Transport Committee

No meetings this period.

New Zealand Automobile Association

Waka Kotahi staff acknowledged that there are issues with the Journey Planner not linking to online mapping providers who show the shortest route and do not take into account any detours that have been put in place. Journey Planner is also not available in 'real time', so this along with misinformation on social media can cause problems and confusion. Developers have some fixes planned and are monitoring the system going forward.

Our monthly meetings continue in Whangarei.

CITIZENS INITIATED REFERENDA

New Plymouth Mayor Neil Holdom is seeking a Citizens Initiated Referenda. The wording which is still pending approval is as follows:

“Should the New Zealand Government fund road maintenance at levels sufficient to reverse the current decline in the average age and condition of our national state highway network”?

There are some legal niceties that need to be tidied up but once this one hits its strides we need to garner as many signatures as we can.

Whilst not legally binding it will send a very strong message to Parliament that we have had enough with our substandard network.

TOLL ROADS

Did you know that the only toll payable anywhere on SHW 1 is ours!

Effective 1 July Waka Kotahi has announced an increase in the toll by 20c for cars, bikes and light commercial whilst trucks and 40c for buses and heavy vehicles.

Two toll roads exist in Tauranga being the Tauranga Eastern Link (which replaced a section of Sh2) and Takitimu Drive Expressway (which connects SH29 and SH2).

Having just driven the length of the North Island and experienced the wonders of the Waikato Expressway, Transmission Gully and the Kapiti Coast Mackays to Peka Peka Expressway. I have to ask why has Northland been singled out?

Toll charges

	Car, motorcycle, or light commercial vehicle (3.5 tonnes or less)	Heavy vehicle (over 3.5 tonnes)
Northern Gateway Toll Road	\$2.60	\$5.20

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Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road	\$2.30	\$5.60
Takitimu Drive Toll Road	\$2.10	\$5.40