

Speaking notes for the KiwiRail Notice of Requirement Hearing, 16 August 2021

The Manawatū District Council is in support of the KiwiRail Notice of Requirement application for the Regional Freight Hub. This development aligns with the Accelerate25 vision for a prosperous, strong and vibrant Manawatū-Whanganui region. It also aligns with the Manawatū District Council's priority for 2021-2031 of "Infrastructure fit for future" whereby we ensure that the Manawatu District has infrastructure that meets the needs of the community now and into the future.

A key reason for our Council's support is that we recognise the economic and employment benefits the development will bring to the wider Manawatū Region. MDC also recognises the future benefits of the Freight Hub in getting freight off roads and onto rail, including safety improvements, emissions reductions and reduced road congestion.

While the freight hub is being constructed outside our District boundary, the effects on the roading network will directly impact on our residents. Railway Road is one of the primary commuter routes between Feilding and Palmerston North. Speed limits on this route are already highly variable and MDC is concerned that this development may further affect the suitability of this route for commuter traffic. Given the significance of this route to the wider Manawatū Community, it is critical that KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi, the Palmerston North City Council and the Manawatū District Council work together to ensure a well-planned, integrated transportation network. Manawatu District Council has already played a significant role in the enablement of the Industrial growth and Distribution Hub growth for the region by transferring a significant amount of our District to Palmerston North City for this purpose, about nine years ago.

The importance of the road links between Feilding and Palmerston North must be a top priority as there are over 21,200 vehicle movements a day between the two centres. As a comparison there are just over 8,000 per day on State Highway 2 between Napier and Hastings. 14,600 (or just over 2/3) of the Feilding to Palmerston North movements are over the Aorangi Bridge by the Feilding Golf Club, and 6,600 (just under 1/3) are on Awahuri Road and State Highway 3. There are 6,500 movements on Railway Road.

Because Feilding and Palmerston North are so close, residents of both commute between the two urban centres. A significant percentage of our Manawatu District Council staff for example live in Palmerston North and work based in Feilding, and of course more commute the opposite way. With the population growth taking place now and proposed, the consideration of efficient road links between Feilding and Palmerston North, as part of this project, is crucial in our opinion.

There is also considerable vehicle movement between the industrial areas of the Manawatu, being the North East area by the Airport and proposed Rail Hub, Longburn, and the two in Feilding; Kawakawa Industrial Park and Riverside Industrial Park.

Proposed Conditions:

There were no references to the Manawatū District Council in the proposed conditions in Appendix 3 of the Notice of Requirement Application. However, the revised KiwiRail Conditions in the evidence of Karen Bell, dated 9 July 2021, do give appropriate consideration to the Manawatū District Council. We consider that the proposed conditions, as included in Karen Bell's evidence, provide an appropriate mechanism for considering potential effects of the development on those matters that are of interest or concern to MDC. The references to

cycling, school bus routes and infrastructure) and that safe pedestrian and cyclist access in the vicinity of the site is available at all times during the construction of the Freight Hub.

- Condition 67 that requires KiwiRail to provide any updated Construction Traffic Management Plan to MDC (and others) for review and feedback.
- Conditions 78 to 84 that relate to the preparation of an Operational Traffic Management Plan. MDC is particularly supportive of the inclusion of our Council as one of the authorities that KiwiRail must involve in the development of this Plan and any updated plans.

Active Mode Connectivity Palmerston North to Feilding: Shared pathway on Campbell Road

The Notice of Requirement Plans include the Te Araroa Trail. This is part of the shared pathway between Feilding and Palmerston North. By way of an update, MDC has now completed stage 1 of this shared pathway between Waughs Road intersection and the Taonui intersection (2km), apart from a foot bridge over the Taonui Stream. MDC is currently awaiting resource consent to construct this foot bridge.

Stage 2 of the shared pathway is between the Taonui intersection and Nannested Line intersection (2km). KiwiRail is currently reviewing the design. It is hoped that KiwiRail's approval to proceed will be forthcoming prior to October 2021 so that Stage 2 can be completed this summer.

Recognition of mana whenua values

The MDC submission also recommended that the Notice of Requirement address the findings from the cultural impact assessments completed by mana whenua. MDC supports the proposed conditions that require KiwiRail to prepare a Mana Whenua Engagement Framework to recognise and provide for mana whenua values in the area affected by the Freight Hub, to develop mechanisms to avoid or mitigate effects on mana whenua values through the implementation of agreed monitoring and mitigation measures, and to provide opportunities for expression of those values through design.

Future Involvement

MDC is aware that the KiwiRail Freight Hub, regional freight ring road and the extension to the Palmerston North Airport are being considered collectively by key stakeholders, including the Palmerston North City Council and the Central Economic Development Agency, under the banner of the "Central New Zealand Distribution Hub Project." The combined consideration of these projects is a way of reducing confusion and improving communication with affected communities. MDC has agreed to the proposed governance and management structure for the Distribution Hub project that is included in the draft Distribution Hub Strategy by CEDA and PNCC.

The Manawatū District Council looks forward to working with KiwiRail and other stakeholders on strategic transport planning and improvements for the future. We hope that our involvement will help to identify other opportunities for mutual benefit.