



8 September 2023

Attn: Transport Team  
Horizons Regional Council  
Private Bag 11025  
Manawatū Mail Centre

*Submitted via [transport@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:transport@horizons.govt.nz)*

Tēnā Koutou,

**Rangitikei District Council feedback on Connect the Dots | Regional Services Review**

Rangitikei District Council (Council) thanks Horizons for the opportunity to provide feedback on the regional services review. We appreciate the effort Horizons has put into this engagement and are sharing the information via Rangitikei platforms as well.

People within the Rangitikei District currently have limited public transport options available:

- Marton to Palmerston North Commuter – Monday to Friday. Services Marton and Bulls.
- Taihape to Palmerston North – third Thursday of the month. Services Taihape, Ōhingaiti, Hunterville, Marton, Bulls.
- Taihape to Whanganui – first Thursday of the month. Services Taihape, Ōhingaiti, Hunterville, Marton, Turakina.
- Whanganui to Palmerston North Commuter – Monday to Friday. Services Bulls.

Public transport is important to ensure our communities have access to affordable transport options that meet their need and connect them to work, education, essential services, and amenities. For the Rangitikei, data indicates 111 people depart the district for Whanganui Central, and 114 for Palmerston North Central.

Our draft Community Spatial Plan has several references to public transport we would like to make you aware of and consider as part of the Regional Services Review. You can find the full document on our website [www.rangitikei.govt.nz/paetawhiti](http://www.rangitikei.govt.nz/paetawhiti)

In the Priority Areas identified for the entire Rangitikei, public transport aspirations and outcomes are referenced as follows:

- Thriving Communities – emissions reduction (p.21), supporting infrastructure (p.23).
- Connected Communities – transport networks (p.25).
- Unique Communities – high quality towns (p.28).

*Making this place home.*

In addition, public transport outcomes and actions are referenced throughout the towns and settlement chapters.

- Bulls – Key Theme 1 – Transport network improvements (p.37, 48).
- Hunterville – Key Theme 3 – Better transport (p.56, 62).
- Koitiata – Key Theme 4 – Infrastructure and transport (p.75, 76).
- Mangaweka – Key Theme 3 – Transport links (p.86, 88).
- Marton – Key Theme 6 – Transport improvements (p.100, 108).
- Rātana Pā – Key Theme 3 – Transport improvements (p.137, 138).
- Taihape – Key Theme 6 – Improved transport options (p.167, 172).
- Turakina – Key Theme 4 – Improved transport connections (p.183, 184).
- Utiku – Key Theme 2 – Transport networks (p.189, 192).
- Whangaehu – Key Theme 3 – Access (p.197, 198).

Key areas we specifically request Horizons to consider:

- *Passenger Rail* – Council can see opportunities associated with:
  - Extending the Capital Connection through to Marton and Taihape.
  - Should the extension of the Capital Connection into the Rangitīkei not be feasible, improving connections by road to the Capital Connection should be a priority (e.g. via bus/shuttle services).
  - Adding stops on the Northern Explorer within the Rangitīkei and expanding this service.
  - The use of Rail between Whanganui and Palmerston North (and vice versa) for commuters.
- *Bus/shuttle services* – Council recognises the barriers that traditional bus services have in servicing smaller communities. We request Horizons consider emerging methods and technologies in public transport provision. This would include consideration of on-demand shuttle services, and autonomous vehicles (when the technology becomes available).
- *Connection to regional services* – Council would like Horizons to consider the importance of connection from our district to key regional services, such as hospitals in Palmerston North & Whanganui, and Massey University in Palmerston North.

Ngā mihi



Andy Watson  
**Mayor of the Rangitīkei**