



RANGITIKEI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

9 May 2022

Horizons Regional Council
Private Bag 11025
Manawātū Mail Centre
Palmerston North 4442

Submission on Horizons Regional Council's Public Transport Plan

Rangitikei District Council (RDC) thanks Horizons Regional Council for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Regional Public Transport Plan, and requests an opportunity for the Mayor to speak to this submission at Hearings on the 10th of June.

As a local authority within the region, RDC represents the interests of residents and businesses in our District. Transport is a vital factor in people's access to employment, services, social connection, and recreation. RDC recognises the direction given by central government to increase focus on opportunities to mitigate climate impacts through encouraging the use of sustainable public transport options.

Recent feedback on Pae Tawhiti Rangitikei Beyond, Council's Spatial Planning project, has highlighted community support for increased bus and train connections within and outside of the District. RDC recognises the need to balance greater transport availability with the higher per-ride costs for routes with low usage. However, as the current services in the District consist of daily commuter services and once monthly off-peak routes, RDC suggests that more can be done to achieve the vision expressed in the Chair's message: *"enabling people to use public transport to get where they want to go, when they want to go. Evenings, weekends, work hours, the middle of the day, and holidays"*.

RDC encourages Horizons to consider new routes, changes to existing routes or trials of innovative transport solutions where the opportunity arises. As the Plan acknowledges, infrequent or inconvenient service times may impact on usage rates for services in the district, rather than low usage demonstrating a lack of local appetite for public transport. *"Myway by Metro"* is an on-demand public transport service developed in Timaru that demonstrates an alternative public transport option. Users of this service request transport online, via an app, or through the Council's contact centre. Scheduling technology calculates effective routes for shuttles to collect and transport passengers. While *Myway by Metro* covers an urban area, the service demonstrates that non-traditional public transport services offer solutions where an area has low but consistent demand for public transport.

RDC notes the mention of a review of the Taihape to Palmerston North/Whanganui bus services and looks forward to participating in this project. The Plan also mentions the possibility of connecting bus services to the Capital Connection or new rail links. RDC is enthusiastic to be included in these discussions.

RDC acknowledges that strong communication between regional and local councils enables future planning for public transport and hopes to continue with a positive relationship. RDC is eager to have input into future planning or discussions on public transport opportunities, and to support the uptake of public transport in the District.

Naku noa

Andy Watson
Mayor of the Rangitikei

Making this place home.