

Report 2014.56
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Committee Council
Author Angus Gabara, Manager Rail Operations

Wellington Regional Rail Plan 2013

1. Purpose

This report summarises the 2013 revision to the Wellington Regional Rail Plan (the 2013 RRP) and seeks the Council's approval to include key aspects of the 2013 RRP in the formal review of the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP).

2. Vision

The RRP Vision is:

“To deliver a modern, reliable and accessible rail system that competitively moves people and freight in an economic, environmental, integrated and socially sustainable way.”

3. Background

In February 2009 the Greater Wellington Regional Transport Committee endorsed the “Wellington Regional Rail Plan 2010 – 2035 A Better Rail Experience” (the 2010 RRP), which set out a pathway for the long-term development of the region's metro rail network.

The 2010 RRP provided flexibility to respond to changing external pressures and community needs. The flexibility is to be achieved through a detailed review and update of the RRP every three or so years.

Officers have now completed the first revision to the 2010 RRP, which is subtitled ‘A Fresh Look at a Better Rail Experience’. The 2013 revision takes into account the significant network improvements made since 2010, the benefits they have delivered, changing patterns of use, customer and community expectations and the constraints imposed by the changing economic climate.

The preparation and revision of the RRP is a condition of on-going rail funding from the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) and key aspects of it will form part of the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP). The upcoming review of the

RPTP will provide a more formal mechanism for engaging with the public on the main elements of the 2013 RRP as one part of the design and operation of the Wellington public transport network.

4. Focus of the revision

The 2013 RRP primarily addresses the short-medium term development of the Wellington passenger rail network to 2020 through the implementation of Rail Scenario 1 (RS1). However the 2013 RRP also signals how the development of the network may occur from the end of RS1 in 2020 through to 2035.

The 2013 RRP:

- reviews the ‘base case’ (Section 2)
- refreshes Rail Scenario 1 (Section 3, 5, 6)
- confirms preliminary public view on priorities (Section 4)
- assesses RRP economic performance (Section 7, 8)
- reviews the implementation pathway (Section 9)
- reviews specific longer-term network issues (section 10).

5. Refreshed Rail Scenario 1 (RS1)

In the 2013 RRP RS1 remains the next stage in the development of Wellington’s metro rail system, but changes have been made to how RS1 will be delivered.

The current metro rail system could be made more efficient by redesigning the service patterns and subsequently the use of rolling stock and other resources. Patronage peaks in a 15 minute window in morning peak period when 30% of passengers arrive at Wellington Railway Station. This concentration of demand creates challenges because so much resource is necessary just to manage this “peak hour factor”.

To use our rail resources more efficiently RS1 has been refreshed to provide a nominal 15 minute service on all metro lines during the morning (AM) Peak time.

Key features of the refreshed RS1 are:

- A new regularised (clock face) timetable with an enhanced AM Peak Hour service
- A new service pattern based on an inner metro style service originating from Porirua, Waterloo and Johnsonville stations, and an outer suburban style service originating from Waikanae, Upper Hutt and Masterton
- Network hubs at the busiest stations – Waterloo and Porirua – and more metro services starting from these hubs (up to five trains per hour) during

the AM Peak Hour. More trains with fewer carriages across the peak period giving people more flexible travel options

- More express trains from stations on the outer network.

Modelling shows the new AM Peak Hour service pattern will benefit existing rail users with faster trips and reduced waiting time. It is also expected to encourage more people to travel by train, and consequently reduce the GWRC rail subsidy and reduce road congestion.

6. Kapiti Stations

A review of the costs associated with the implementation of Raumati Station has calculated that the 'Base Cost' is in the order of \$9.3 million an increase of 20% from the figures stated in the Kapiti Railway Stations Concept Design (KRSCD) Scoping Study (2008).

The modelled patronage forecasts and updated costs provide for a Benefit Cost Ratio of 0.7. This analysis confirms that the implementation of Raumati Station is not viable from an 'Economic Efficiency' perspective. A detailed overview of the economic evaluation undertaken is presented in Appendix H of the RRP.

The proposed site(s) for a Raumati Station do not have sufficient land available for park and ride facilities, and pedestrian and cycling access is very constrained by current and future roading.

The proposed location is very close to Paraparaumu Station, which is both inefficient from an operating perspective and results in the vast majority of model generated Raumati Station users simply switching from using Paraparaumu Station. Reruns of the modelled result have been performed after discussion with proponents of a new station and higher future (2021) growth numbers were agreed and used. The model results only increased new users from 17 to 20.

On the basis of this information, it is considered that the implementation of a new railway station at Raumati no longer contributes to the realisation of the Wellington RRP 'Vision Statement' nor does it support any of the identified 'targeted outcomes'.

The analysis undertaken for Raumati also serves as a 'viability benchmark' for the future consideration of new stations, in so much as modelled peak hour patronage needs to be in the order of 300 new passengers.

7. RS1 Implementation Timing

Our preferred pathway involves a phased approach to implementing RS1. This gives Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) the flexibility to respond to changing demand, community needs and available resources. Stops – or decision points – along the pathway provide opportunities to regularly reassess options. This phased approach also helps manage risk, allowing for the significant lead times required to order new rolling stock and undertake large infrastructure projects.

RS1 is expected to be fully completed in 2020, which coincides with the completion of KiwiRail's catch-up renewals programme funding.

To maintain momentum and provide the greatest value for money, wherever possible, the network improvements that are part of RS1 will be dovetailed with other planned work. This synergy of projects will deliver benefits earlier, as well as optimise use of resources and reduce overall costs.

8. RS1 Funding

The extensive evaluations undertaken to update the RRP has demonstrated that targeted investment in rail in Wellington is considerably worthwhile.

There are no immediate budget implications for implementing RS1 as activities requiring expenditure don't commence until the 2017/18 financial year and are then spread over a five year period. However, funding will have to be considered in the development of the next Long Term Plan and the government's contribution to network infrastructure will need to be discussed with government agencies.

9. Summary of economic evaluation

Revision of the RRP has included a comprehensive refresh of the underlying economic analysis.

Implementation of the 'Base Case' set out in the 2010 RRP has now been fully completed and has delivered considerably more benefit than expected, especially in terms of increased capacity, and this needs to be factoring into forward planning.

A number of additional infrastructure enhancements that are essential for the implementation of RS1 have also been confirmed, thus allowing for the refinement of the preferred pathway to implementation.

While this refreshed RRP largely follows the 2010 RRP, there are a number of significant differences that have been considered during the economic evaluation, namely:

- A more detailed model of passenger transport in the region, namely the Wellington Passenger Transport Model (WPTM), has been used in the latest economic evaluation
- During 2012, NZTA agreed to assist with the funding of a second tranche of new Matangi trains. This means the Ganz Mavag units will be decommissioned within the next few years rather than being refurbished. This was part of the 'options' in the previous RRP and can now be considered to have moved from being in the options to being part of the Do Minimum (DM)
- As a result of the Matangi fleet decision, vehicle quality benefits no longer appear in the evaluation since improved rolling stock is also part of the DM. Reliability and crowding benefits have also reduced compared with the 2009 RRP. The remaining reliability benefits arise from double

tracking north of Trentham and the remaining crowding benefits are the result of timetable and capacity improvements

- The Matangi purchase has also led to a reduction in capital and operating (e.g. maintenance) costs in the evaluation
- Benefits to existing users, from reduced in-vehicle and waiting times, are included in the RRP for the first time
- The other significant difference in the evaluation is that the NZTA discount rate has fallen from 10% to 8% and the evaluation period has increased from 25 to 30 years. This affects both costs and benefits.

The net effect of all the above factors is a BCR of 1.5 if new revenue is excluded and 1.8 if it is included. A series of sensitivity tests has shown this score to be robust. Investment in our rail network is a capital intensive process that delivers substantial long-term benefits in excess of 25 years. The investments we make now – to move people and freight more efficiently and effectively – will not only benefit today’s rail and road users but also ensure the next generation enjoys a better rail experience.

10. Communication

The proposed communications process for the 2013 RRP is as follows:

- Council endorsement of the 2013 RRP with key aspects to be included in the draft RPTP
- Final public release and publication as part of the suite of formal RPTP documents.

11. Next steps

Following endorsement via the RPTP process GWRC will:

- Work with NZTA to develop a funding plan
- Work with KiwiRail to develop an Implementation Plan for the network enhancements. This plan will consider operational parameters (including staging and disruption), asset responsibilities and ownership, rail industry policy and procurement programmes.

12. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

12.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires GWRC to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the decisions sought in this report be considered to have low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

13. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Notes that the refreshed Rail Scenario 1 (RS1) is the preferred next stage in the development of the Wellington Metropolitan rail system.***
4. ***Endorses the 2013 revision of the Wellington Regional Rail Plan for the purposes of public consultation through the Regional Public Transport Plan process***

Report approved by:

Angus Gabara
Manager, Rail Operations

Report approved by:

Wayne Hastie
General Manager, Public
Transport

Attachment 1: Draft Wellington Regional Rail Plan 2013