

Report on Hamilton to Auckland Passenger Rail

Date: 12 April 2017

To: Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council, Waikato Regional Council, NZ Transport Agency, Auckland Council, and Auckland Transport

From: Waikato Regional Council representative on the North Waikato Integrated Growth Management Programme Business Case

Subject: **Report on Hamilton to Auckland Passenger Rail Service**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the key findings of a 2017 assessment undertaken by Waikato Regional Council staff on the 2011 Rail Working Party Final Recommendation Report; and to seek feedback from the North Waikato Integrated Growth Management Programme Business Case partner organisations on the three options identified in this report and to advise on a preferred option.

Background

The Hamilton to Auckland Passenger Rail Working Party (RWP)¹ was formed in 2010 to work through the technical and operational feasibility of establishing a passenger rail service between Hamilton and Auckland, and to make recommendations to member organisations on the preferred service option and funding requirements.

The final RWP Recommendation Report which included a preferred service proposal was presented to the RWP partner councils (Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council, Waikato and Waipa District Councils) in November 2011 (see Attachment 1 for a summary of this preferred service proposal). In 2011 the proposal was not formally supported by partner councils mainly due to the potential financial impacts on ratepayers.

A joint Auckland-Waikato political meeting was held on 19 July 2016 to bring together elected representatives and senior staff from Auckland Council, Waikato District Council, Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council and key stakeholder organisations (WaterCare, Auckland Transport and the NZ Transport Agency) to discuss and confirm key cross-boundary issues and to agree on shared objectives and investment opportunities.

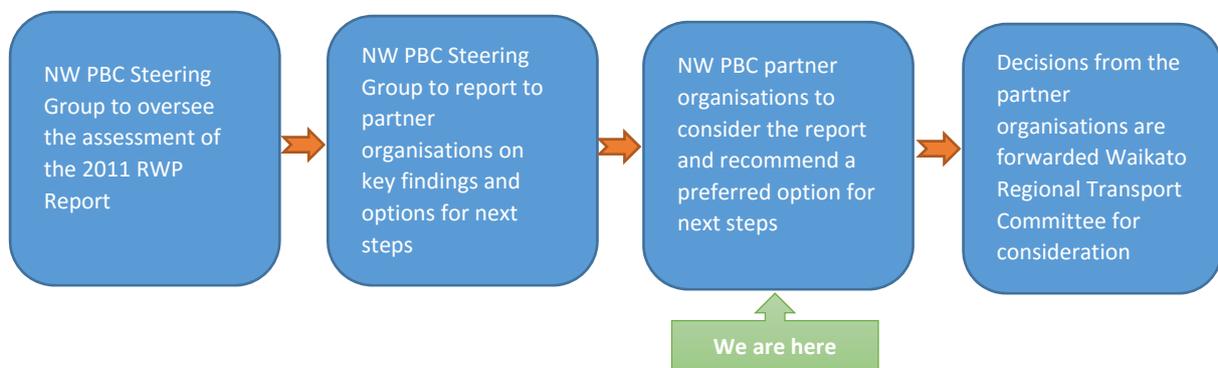
At the meeting the group requested an evidence-based 'position paper on passenger rail' to be prepared, with a shared view across councils, Auckland Transport and the NZ Transport Agency.

The issue of passenger rail between Auckland and Waikato as comprising part of a wider programme of work on cross-boundary issues was also discussed at a November 2016 meeting between the new Auckland Council Mayor Phil Goff and Waikato Regional Councillors

¹The Rail Working Party comprised representatives from Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton City Council, Waikato and Waipa District Councils, KiwiRail, Auckland Transport, Auckland Council, NZTA and the Campaign for Better Transport

The request for a position paper was referred to the North Waikato Integrated Growth Management Programme Business Case (North Waikato PBC). The Steering Group for this project agreed to oversee further work to help inform a collective position on Auckland to Hamilton passenger rail service. However this work would not form part of the North Waikato PBC project, but would come under the steering group umbrella as a distinct piece of work. The North Waikato PBC Steering Group consists of staff from Waikato District Council, Waikato Regional Council, NZ Transport Agency, Auckland Transport, and Auckland Council. Hamilton City Council has also been included on the Steering Group to assist with the Hamilton to Auckland rail review work.

It was also agreed by the Steering Group that the '2011 Hamilton to Auckland Passenger RWP Recommendation Report' (2011 RWP Report) would form the basis of the rail assessment work to test if the service proposal and key assumptions identified in the 2011 RWP Report are still valid, and to outline appropriate options for next steps to be considered by the North Waikato PBC partner organisations. The pathway identified by the North Waikato PBC Steering Group for this rail review is outlined in the diagram below:



A high level assessment of the 2011 RWP Report was undertaken by Waikato Regional Council staff with input from the members of North Waikato PBC project partners, and this is discussed in the report below.

Discussion - 2017 assessment of the 2011 RWP Final Recommendation Report

The 2017 assessment found that the 2011 RWP process was based on an assumption that a Hamilton to Auckland passenger rail service is needed, and the scope of the 2011 review was limited to:

- Undertaking a technical assessment to identify options for a passenger rail service between Hamilton and Auckland; and
- Determine the willingness of parties to contribute to funding such a service.

It is considered that the 2011 RWP investigation was fundamentally a technical exercise to determine the feasibility of establishing a passenger rail service, and the process was not founded on a robust strategic/policy assessment i.e. it was unclear why a service is needed and what are the strategic objectives/drivers or key inter-regional issues that this service is intending to address. For this reason, it is difficult to assess the overall merit of the 2011 proposal and/or to determine if there is a 'case' to progress with further rail investigation without a clear understanding of the problem or desired outcomes to be achieved relating to the proposal.

Notwithstanding the above, a high level technical assessment was carried out to assess if the preferred service proposal identified by the RWP is still 'feasible' under the 2017 policy and operating environment. The preferred service proposal identified by the RWP was to implement:

“A 2-year pilot trial of Hamilton to Auckland passenger rail service via the Waterfront route (through Sylvia Park/ Glen Innes) onto the Strand station and carrying on to Newmarket as the termination point for the peak service”.

The 2017 assessment looked at the key changes (policy and broad operational developments) that have occurred since 2011 to test if the assumptions made in the RWP report are still valid, and whether the preferred service proposal is still ‘operationally feasible’.

The detailed 2017 assessment of the RWP preferred service proposal is included in the Attachment 2 of this report, and the key findings are summarised below:

Policy and strategic alignment

- The transport policy context has not undergone significant change since 2011. There is however a stronger focus on ensuring that investment proposals are supported by robust business cases, to ensure that the core problem/benefits and investment objectives are clearly understood and that the solution identified is the right response to address the problem. In addition more weight is being given by central government to responding to growth in high growth urban areas in the recently released Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (2018/19-2027/28).
- At a regional level, the role of inter-regional passenger rail was considered further during the development of the Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2045 (RLTP) in 2014/15. The RLTP identifies a passenger rail service between Hamilton and Auckland as a ‘medium to long term’ priority for the Waikato region. The current priority is to promote the North Island Main Trunk line as a primary freight corridor for the upper North Island, and to support/advocate projects of inter-regional significance, such as third rail line from Westfield to Wiri and rail electrification from Pukekohe to Papakura, to improve network capacity and efficiency.
- The Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) work was completed in 2016, and identified the need to invest in a third main rail line and extend rail electrification from Papakura to Pukekohe, however these projects are not yet funded.
- While there is no clear regional policy mandate for the provision of an inter-regional passenger rail service, the current regional policies do reflect the desire from both Auckland and Waikato regions to improve cross-boundary planning/collaboration and to strengthen transport connections between both regions to enhance economic growth and productivity.

Operational feasibility

- Network access during peak periods has been identified as a critical constraint and the following issues have been identified that will affect the feasibility of the proposed service:
 - There is presently no operational and berthing capacity available at either the Britomart or Newmarket stations.
 - Whilst a limited peak and off peak service could be operated between Hamilton and the Strand (subject to detailed operational modelling), it is not considered as a viable option as the service would not be able to continue once the City Rail Link (CRL) is completed. Auckland Transport is committed to increasing the Auckland Metro service frequencies in conjunction with the opening of CRL. This will increase peak frequencies on the southern line and as a result (and given the established rail freight paths) there will be no spare capacity between Papakura and Westfield line to accommodate any new peak service.
 - Given the planned Metro service improvements and the anticipated growth in freight rail, the ability to operate additional trains through north of Papakura is

extremely limited. The network constraint issues are unlikely to be resolved until the 'third main' (Wiri to Westfield) and the proposed works at Westfield Junction are completed. These project are included in the ATAP, however no funding has been committed.

- Whilst the network/access issues at the Britomart station could be improved with the completion of CRL project, it is noted that diesel services are no longer permitted to enter the Britomart station due to safety reasons. Given this, any new inter-regional service that will require access to the Britomart station should be planned in conjunction with the network electrification between Auckland and Hamilton.
- The maximum expected travel time as indicated in the RWP report was about 2 hours 20 minutes (from Frankton to the Strand station). It is anticipated that the journey time is likely to take longer due to the current Metro service timetables and the planned service level improvements in the future.

Station upgrade and rolling stock

- RWP has assessed the infrastructure requirements at the different stations in Waikato, and it was concluded that only The Base (Hamilton), Ngaruawahia and Tuakau stations would require more extensive work in terms of platform upgrade and pedestrian crossing etc.
- Waikato District Council has identified in its 2016 Long Term Plan an investment commitment of \$500,000 to upgrade the Tuakau rail platform (Note that this is reliant upon a 50 percent co-funding contribution from the NZ Transport Agency which is not confirmed). This is staged to occur in 2022.
- Hamilton City Council has reported that work is currently underway to investigate potential for land banking sites for passenger rail stations and park and/or ride facilities in Hamilton.
- It is noted that Auckland Transport have no spare rolling stock available for use on a Hamilton to Auckland service. Further assessment will need to be undertaken in conjunction with KiwiRail to assess the availability of rolling stock and any required upgrade/refurbishment (e.g. toilet facilities) to support a future inter-regional passenger rail service.

Funding requirements

- It should be noted that no detailed financial analysis was undertaken by the Steering Group in 2017 given that the 2011 proposal is not considered as a feasible option under the current network conditions. However some data have been collected, including Future Proof population projections and 2013 Census Journey to Work data which could be used for future patronage assessment.
- It is also noted that the NZTA Business Case Approach (BCA) is identified as a pre-requisite in determining whether or not to proceed with a proposed investment. Any new transport activity seeking funding via the National Land Transport Programme must be able to demonstrate that the BCA principles have been applied in developing the case for investment. The BCA will form an important consideration for any future transport proposal/activity and it will contain details of, the problem or opportunity this proposed service is aiming to address, what alternatives to this proposal have been assessed and how the proposal fits in with national and regional priorities.
- Whilst there was no business case prepared for the 2011 passenger rail proposal, it was recommended by the RWP as a logic next steps, if there was a general willingness from the funding partners to proceed further with the proposal.

Based on the 2017 assessment, it is considered that service proposal identified by the RWP in 2011 is no longer feasible under the current conditions. Operational constraints within the Auckland network will remain, and any additional commuter trains, both short term and long term, may not

be able to be accommodated north of Papakura. The network constraint issues are unlikely to be addressed until the proposed rail improvements (i.e. third main line and the proposed works at Westfield Junction) identified in the ATAP are implemented. However the detailed timeframe and funding of these rail projects have not been confirmed.

Furthermore, the review of the 2011 report has raised some concerns about the lack of assessment of broader options beyond passenger rail and a clear problem statement or investment objective. Without this it would be difficult to develop a robust business case that would support the introduction of the service envisaged in the 2011 RWP Report.

Lastly, the 2017 assessment has highlighted a number of factors that will need to be considered in order to progress any future work on passenger rail service between Auckland and Hamilton, these include:

- A business case approach (BCA) – there needs to be a clear understanding of the problem or opportunity related to strengthening transport connections or broader social and economic relationships between Hamilton and Auckland, and to confirm what would be the best approach/solution in achieving this (with clear evidence). The BCA would also allow the consideration of a wide range of options and integration of modes to improve transport connections between Hamilton and Auckland.
- Network access issues – constraints surrounding the Auckland rail network and the associated infrastructure improvements will need to be considered in light of any future passenger rail work (including any proposed business case). Clear policy signals should also be provided in key regional planning documents (e.g. RLTP) to support and advocate for rail infrastructure projects that will provide clear inter-regional benefits for both freight and passenger rail, i.e. third main and extension of electrification from Papakura to Pukekohe.
- Funding commitment - a funding commitment from partner councils and/or central government agency to support the business case planning and implementation of any future passenger rail proposal.
- Stakeholder engagement – engagement with key stakeholders (i.e. KiwiRail) and interested parties (The Rail Opportunity Network) will be critical to ensure good buy-in of the process and outcome/decision of any future passenger rail work.

Proposed options for next steps

Based on the above findings, the review has identified three broad options to be considered by the North Waikato PBC partner organisations as possible next steps. Some brief analysis on the proposed options is provided in the table below:

| Options | Indicative costs | Benefits | Risks |
|----------------------------|------------------|---|--|
| 1. Do nothing / status quo | Nil | - No investment outlaid until such time as deemed appropriate | - Not meeting stakeholder/community or political expectations - Nature of potential problems and opportunities not clearly understood |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 2. Prepare a detailed rail feasibility study to explore potential options for a passenger rail connection between Auckland and Hamilton | \$50-100,000 ² (dependent on scope) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relatively easy and quick to update - Findings easy to communicate with key stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not provide a clear strategic basis on why a service is needed - Takes a narrow approach and doesn't consider other alternatives or transport modes - No buy in from central government to possible future investment without a compelling and robust business case process. |
| 3. Develop a Strategic Business Case to identify the problem or opportunity in relation to the inter-regional connections between Auckland/Hamilton and associated investment benefits that could be gained. | \$30-50,000 for the Strategic Case ³ . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A more collaborative process and best practice for decision-making - Enable agreed problems, benefits and investment objectives to be developed, supported by evidence-based information - Enable consideration of options and alternatives - Strategic case outputs could help to inform the RLTPs on the inter-regional priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of commitment from project partners to progress to future business case stage. - Note that the strategic case is a precursor to a detailed business case which could require shared commitment of at least \$50-100,000 plus staff resourcing. |

Feedback is now sought from the North Waikato PBC partner organisations on the three options and to advise on a preferred option. It is also noted that should either Options 2 or 3 be identified by the partner organisations as the preferred way forward, the costs will need to be shared between all the partners. It is intended that any decision to progress with further rail work would be made in time to inform partner council long term plan discussions.

Signed by the Waikato Regional Council representative on the North Waikato Integrated Growth Management Programme Business Case Steering Group

Annika Lane - Member of North Waikato PBC Steering Group
***Manager, Infrastructure and Integration
 Science and Strategy
 Waikato Regional Council***

² An estimate based on actual costs incurred in 2011 Hamilton to Auckland rail investigation (Staff time and consultancy costs).

³ Note that Option 3 could lead to a further funding commitment from partner councils and central government in future, pending decisions taken as part of the business case approach. Costs will be able to be revised once the business case process is underway and more information is to hand.

Attachment 1: Summary of the Hamilton to Auckland Passenger Rail Recommendation Report Preferred Passenger Rail Service Option (September 2011) and associated costs and the rating option

Summary of the Preferred Passenger Rail Service Option

Hamilton to Auckland service via the Waterfront route (through Sylvia Park/ Glen Innes) onto the Strand station and carrying on to Newmarket as the termination point for the peak service.

The service proposal includes

- Two peak and two off-peak trips every weekday
- Services five days a week excluding public holidays

The service will be operated by one Silver Fern railcar with a seating capacity of 96 passengers to start with. Once the implementation is confirmed, the viability/potential of providing a connecting bus at the Strand station to link up with the proposed train service will be investigated.

It is proposed that the peak service will start around 0600 in the morning from Frankton station and around 0610 from The Base. The maximum expected travel time is 2 hours and 20 minutes approximately. However, indications are that travel time could be closer to 2 hours. Further investigation on this will be carried out once implementation is confirmed. The travel time is expected to be the same as travelling via Newmarket to get to the Strand due to lesser congestion on the Waterfront line. The expected departure and arrival times as shown below

Peak services (2 peak services or 1 peak return service)–

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Depart Hamilton | 06:00 |
| Arrive Strand, Auckland | 08:20 |
| Arrive Newmarket, Auckland | 08:27 |
| Depart Strand, Auckland | 17:30 |
| Arrive Hamilton | 19:45 |

Off peak services (2 off peak services; one departing Auckland and one departing Hamilton) –

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Depart Auckland (Britomart) | 09:30 |
| Arrive Hamilton | 11:45 |
| Depart Hamilton | 14:30 |
| Arrive Auckland (Britomart) | 16:45 |
| Depart Auckland (Strand) | 17:30 (return peak service noted above) |

In regard to the preferred option the Recommendation Report noted that the final timetable will need to be worked out with Auckland Transport and KiwiRail closer to the time of implementation of the service. This will depend on time slot availability and network capacity at the time of implementation. Once the implementation is confirmed, a further survey or focus groups could be conducted to gauge the timetable preference especially for the off-peak service.

The proposal is for the service to run between Frankton station in Hamilton and Newmarket in Auckland (via the Strand station) at peak times. The off peak service could operate between Frankton in Hamilton and Britomart station in Auckland. The proposed service includes stops at the following stations:

- Frankton, Hamilton
- The Base, Hamilton
- Huntly, Waikato District
- Te Kauwhata, Waikato District
- Tuakau, Waikato District
- Papatoetoe, Auckland
- The Strand, Auckland
- Newmarket, Auckland

Map 1 below shows the route and stops for the proposed Hamilton to Auckland service

Map1: Route and stops for proposed service



Summary of costs and the rating option for the proposed trial service (Source: 2011 Recommendation Report)⁴

Costs

Costs projected below are based on operating costs provided by KiwiRail to the Rail Working Party in KiwiRail's updated proposal in December 2010.

| Costs | \$Million |
|--|------------------|
| Operating cost | \$1.97 |
| Rolling stock (purchase and refurbishment) | \$0 |
| Infrastructure cost | |
| Station upgrades | \$0.92 |
| Contingency (5% -includes marketing) | \$0.10 |
| Total cost (during trial period) | \$2.99 |

Note: No estimation has been made of management or other administrative costs on Waikato regional council for managing the service. These will have to be calculated and added in once the implementation is agreed upon.

Assumptions:

- Operating costs are a[per annum
- Cost is assumed to be indexed though not included in the calculations
- Trial contract period of 2 years
- Infrastructure costs to be met by the territorial authority in which the station is located
- All costs exclude GST

Rating option

The Rail Working Party evaluated five different rating options for funding the proposed service. Based on benefits assessment and impact analysis, the Rail Working Party recommended the following rating option in the 2011 Recommendation Report:

- All properties in Hamilton City area rated at 100%.
- Waikato District properties within 10km of service rated at 100%.
- Waikato District properties outside of 10km buffer pay 30% differential.
- All Waipa District properties pay 30% differential.
- All remaining properties within the Waikato region pay 10% differential

The potential rating impacts have been modelled based on the following cost and funding assumptions (as per Section 5 of the 2011 Rail Working Party Recommendation Report report) have been applied:

Operational costs

Total cost of service \$1.97 million

⁴ Note that this data is taken from the 2011 Recommendation Report and would need to be updated.

Fare recoveries \$0.74 million
 Rating requirement \$1.23 million

Table 9: Potential Rating Impact

| Without NZTA Subsidy | | With NZTA subsidy | |
|--|---------|---|--------|
| Per property rate - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton City and • 10km buffer area • in Waikato District | \$16.63 | Per property rate - Direct benefit area | \$8.32 |
| Per property rate – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waikato District (outside of 10km buffer area) and • Waipa District | \$4.99 | Per property rate - Waikato/Waipā DC indirect | \$2.50 |
| Per property rate – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest of the properties in the Waikato region | \$1.59 | Per property rate - Region wide | \$0.80 |

Attachment 2: Steering Group assessment of the 2011 Rail Working Party Recommendation Report on Hamilton to Auckland Passenger Rail Service

The Hamilton to Auckland Passenger Rail Working Party (RWP) was formed in 2010 to work through the technical and operational feasibility of establishing a passenger rail service between Hamilton and Auckland, and to make recommendations to member organisations on the preferred service option and funding requirements. A number of service options were investigated by the RWP in association with Auckland Transport and KiwiRail, and the following option was recommended as the preferred service proposal for a 2-year pilot trial:

“Hamilton to Auckland passenger rail service via the Waterfront route (through Sylvia Park/ Glen Innes) onto the Strand station and carrying on to Newmarket as the termination point for the peak service.”

A high level assessment has been undertaken on the preferred service proposal identified by the RWP to test if the assumptions made in 2011 RWP report are still valid, and whether the preferred option is still operationally feasible. The specific areas considered by the Steering Group as part of its assessment include:

- Policy alignment - strategic fit of the proposed service
- Operational feasibility in terms of, network access, stops en route and journey times for the service
- Station upgrade and other infrastructure requirements
- Financial analysis (patronage projection and funding requirements)

| 2011 Rail Working Party Preferred Service Option: | | 2017 assessment of the 2011 Rail Working Party Preferred Service Option | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <i>To operate a Hamilton to Auckland passenger rail service via the Waterfront route (through Sylvia Park/ Glen Innes) onto the Strand station and carrying on to Newmarket as the termination point for the peak service</i> | | | |
| Service details/perimeter | Key assumption/analysis | What has changed since 2011 | Staff assessment |
| Policy alignment - strategic fit of the proposed service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2011 report stated that a passenger rail service between Hamilton and Auckland is broadly aligned with the national objectives of the 2012-15 Government Policy Statement (GPS), particularly for promoting economic growth and productivity. The proposed service would help to reduce congestion in Auckland⁵ and to improve access to jobs and economic opportunities by making travel/commuting more accessible between two major economic centres. • The report also noted the proposed service would contribute to wider national/regional transport objectives such as improving transport choices, environmental sustainability and road safety. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a national policy level, the operative GPS 2015-18 continues with the direction set out in the previous GPS (2012-15) to focus on economic growth, road safety and value for money. With respect to public transport, the priorities are to focus on growing public transport in major urban centres (Auckland & Wellington) and to increase network productivity on key corridors at peak periods. • It is expected that Government’s strategic transport priorities around economic growth and productivity, road safety, and value for money will remain in the next 2018-21 GPS. There is however an increased emphasis under the economic growth and productivity priority to focus on assisting high growth urban areas⁶ by supporting Housing Infrastructure Fund and the implementation of the Auckland Transport Alignment Project. • At a regional level, the role of inter-regional passenger rail was considered further during the development of the Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2045 (RLTP) in 2014/15. The RLTP identifies a passenger rail service between Hamilton and Auckland as a medium to long term priority for the Waikato region. It also identifies a number of critical constraints/factors that will need to be considered to support a passenger rail service between Auckland and Waikato e.g. Completion of Auckland Central Rail Link and extension of electrification of the rail line from Papakura to Pukekohe to improve network reliability and capacity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy environment has not undergone significant change since 2011, and the Government’s strategic priorities around economic growth and productivity, road safety, and value for money, remain unchanged. However there is an increased focus on transport investment to assist housing development in high growth urban areas (including Auckland and Hamilton). Any future rail proposal will need to be assessed against the current and future GPS strategic priorities and the associated national land transport objectives and results. • Whilst there is no clear regional policy mandate for the provision of an inter-regional passenger rail service, the current regional policies do reflect the Waikato region’s desire to improve inter-regional planning/collaboration and transport connections between Waikato and Auckland, and to look at ways to maximise the potential of each region and drive economic activity and growth. • The Transport Agency has signalled that from 1 July 2015, any new activity seeking funding via the NLTP must be able to demonstrate that the BCA principles have been applied in developing the case for investment. Whilst there was no business case prepared for the 2011 passenger rail proposal, it was recommended by the RWP as a logic next steps, if there was a general willingness from the funding partners to proceed further with the proposal (2011 RWP Final Recommendation Report August 11). The business case will contain details of, the problem |

⁵ 70% of the quantified benefits of the proposed service is attributed to reducing congestion

⁶ As defined in National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Draft Waikato Plan developed under the guidance of a joint committee established by the Waikato Mayoral Forum includes actions that focus on improving cross-boundary public transport connections. It identifies connecting our communities through targeted investment as one of five priorities for the region, and integrating Auckland and Waikato’s transport networks as one of 10 first order priority actions • The Waikato Means Business Strategy 2014⁷ identifies maintaining and building our location advantage, and building, attracting and retaining skills and talent as strategic priorities and areas of focus for the region. • Introduction of the NZTA Business Case Approach (BCA) where the NZ Transport Agency is now required all transport activities seeking inclusion in the National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) to be developed in a manner consistent with the principles of the BCA. • LTMA amendments in 2013 which incorporate a new Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) for planning of public transport services managed by regional councils/unitary councils. | <p>or opportunity this proposed service is aiming to address, what alternatives to this proposal have been assessed and how the proposal fits in with national and regional priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LTMA amendments have established a new policy framework for planning and procurement of public transport services, known as the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM). The PTOM will have particular implications on how public transport services (incl passenger rail) are contracted and managed by regional councils. |
| <p>The operational feasibility of the proposed service</p> | <p><u>Route and terminating station</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was proposed that the service will run between Frankton station in Hamilton and Newmarket in Auckland (via the Strand station with connecting bus services to the CBD) at peak times. • The peak service will travel on Waterfront route through Sylvia Park/ Glen Innes onto the Strand station and carrying on to Newmarket as the termination point. • The off-peak service could operate between Hamilton and Britomart station in Auckland. • The report found that is no berthing capacity available at Britomart station during both the morning and afternoon peak periods, so the only viable option for a service to go into the CBD was via the Strand station. This would however require the provision of new bus services to/from the CBD and the installation of associated bus stops. • Other options considered including, extension of existing Metro service to Hamilton or a Silver Fern service between Hamilton and Pukekohe. However these were not supported due to technical constraints, costs or timetable issues. <p><u>Timetable and journey time</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed service would include 2 peak and 2 off-peak trips every weekday. The morning peak service will start in 6am from Frankton station and arrive at Newmarket at about 8.20am. The maximum expected travel time is about 2 hours 20 minutes. | <p><u>City Rail Link</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constraints with the Britomart station access during peak period still exist and it is unlikely to change until the City Rail Link (CRL) is completed which would greatly improve the capacity and access to the Britomart station. A funding commitment has been made by Auckland Council and Central Government to complete the CRL by 2022/23 and the construction is currently underway. <p><u>Auckland network Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant investment has been made by the Government to electrify Auckland’s rail network from Swanson to Papakura and to upgrade signalling and train control system. The electrified network extends from Papakura in the south to Swanson in the west, and includes the Onehunga Branch Line and Manukau Rail Link. • Most of the Auckland Metro rail services are running on electric units with the exception of Papakura to Pukekohe, which runs a diesel shuttle service. Rail electrification from Papakura to Pukekohe has been included in the Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) for the first decade (2018 to 2028), however the funding has not been confirmed/committed. AT is also investigating the option of battery powered train unit which allow the electric services to be extended to Pukekohe. • The third rail line between Wiri and Westfield is also included as a first decade priority in the ATAP Final Report. This project is essential to provide for passenger and freight growth in Auckland and substantial enabling works have been already underway i.e. a business case has been completed. • Forecast growth rates for Auckland passenger rail pre CRL opening are as follows: 18% (2016/17); 10% (2017/18); 5% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the network/access issues at the Britomart station could be improved with the completion of CRL project, it is noted that diesel services are no longer permitted to enter the Britomart station due to safety reasons. Given this, any new inter-regional service that will require access to the Britomart station should be planned in conjunction with the network electrification between Auckland and Hamilton. • Network access in during peak periods has been identified as a critical constraint. There is presently no operational and berthing capacity available at either the Britomart or Newmarket stations. Whilst a limited peak and off peak service could be operated between Hamilton and the Strand (subject to detailed operational modelling), it is not considered as a viable option as the service would not be able to continue once the City Rail Link (CRL) is completed. Auckland Transport is committed to increase the Auckland Metro service frequencies in conjunction with the opening of CRL. This will increase peak frequencies on the southern line and as a result (and given the established rail freight paths) there will be no spare capacity between Papakura and Westfield line to accommodate any new peak service. • Given the planned Metro service improvements and the anticipated growth in freight rail, the ability to operate additional trains through north of Papakura is extremely limited. The network constraint issues are unlikely to be resolved until the third main rail line and the proposed works at Westfield Junction are completed. These project are included in the ATAP, however no funding has been committed • The maximum expected travel time as indicated in the RWP report was about 2 hours 20 minutes (from Frankton to the Strand station). It is anticipated that the journey time is likely to |

⁷ An economic development strategy of the Waikato region instigated by the Waikato Mayoral Forum completed in February 2014.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | <p><u>Rolling stock</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A silver fern railcar (96 seating capacity) will be used for the start-up service. The railcar will be refurbished to high standard including new interior and toilet facilities. The cost will included in the annual operating cost. This option is also considered as the affordable option | <p>(2018/19); 6% (2019/20); and then 5% per annum until the commencement of City Rail Link services. There is expected to be a significant uplift post the City Rail Link opening with the introduction of higher frequency services.</p> | <p>take longer due to the current Metro service timetables and the planned service level improvements in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is noted that Auckland Transport have no spare rolling stock available for use on a Hamilton to Auckland service. Further assessment will need to be undertaken in conjunction with KiwiRail to assess the availability of rolling stock any required refurbishment (e.g. toilet facilities) to support a future inter-regional passenger rail service |
| Infrastructure/station upgrade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed service includes stops at the following stations – Frankton, The Base, Huntly, Te Kauwhata, Tuakau, Papatoetoe, The Strand and Newmarket. RWP assessed the infrastructure requirements at the different stations in Waikato, and it was concluded that only The Base (Hamilton), Ngaruawahia and Tuakau stations would require more extensive work in terms of platform upgrade and pedestrian crossing It was assumed that capital cost associated with station upgrade will be funded by the territorial authorities (not included in the final preferred proposal). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waikato District Council has identified in its 2016 Long Term Plan an investment commitment of \$500,000 to upgrade the Tuakau rail platform (Note that this is reliant upon a 50 percent co-funding contribution from the NZ Transport Agency which is not confirmed). This is staged to occur in 2022. Hamilton City Council has reported that work is currently underway to investigate potential for land banking sites for passenger rail stations and park and/or ride in Hamilton, specifically in Frankton and Te Rapa. There is currently no funding committed to any future upgrade of the railway stations in Hamilton | |
| Funding requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding requirements for the service proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total cost of service \$1.97 million Fare recoveries \$0.74 million Funding gaps \$1.23 million It was also assumed that a funding application will be made to NZTA supported by a full business case, and will need to be included in the RLTP for NLTP funding consideration. The benefits accruing to Auckland from the proposed service will need to be quantified as part of the business case development and funding contribution will need to be discussed with Auckland Council and Auckland Transport. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should also be noted that the market dynamics may have changed considerably since the 2011 report. While patronage demand is likely to be higher (this has not been assessed), competition from the bus industry is also greater, offering the same journey time, but with greater frequency at less cost. This will have an impact on any rail patronage and revenue assumptions There are significant challenges in identifying and implementing funding across multiple organisations for subsidies through rates and other sources, particularly in the absence of a robust business case. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No detailed financial analysis was carried out, given that the 2011 proposal is not considered as a feasible option under the current network conditions. However some data have been collected, including Future Proof population projections and Census Journey to Work data which could be used for future patronage assessment |