

Report 15.15
Date 9 February 2015
File TP/01/16/12

Committee Regional Transport Committee
Author Natasha Hayes, Senior Transport Planner

Proposed variation to the Wellington Regional Land Transport Programme 2012 – 2015: SH2 Rimutaka Hill Guardrails

1. Purpose

To seek the Regional Transport Committee's (the Committee) support for a variation of the Wellington Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-15, at the request of the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA).

2. Background

2.1 The Regional Land Transport Programme

The current Regional Land Transport Programme 2012 – 2015 (RLTP) was prepared by the Committee, and subsequently approved by Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) in June 2012.

The RLTP contains all the land transport activities proposed to be undertaken throughout the region over 3 financial years, the regional priority of those activities, indicative activities over the following 3 financial years, plus a 10 year financial forecast.

The activities in the RLTP are submitted by the NZTA and 'Approved Organisations' (including the eight territorial authorities and GWRC). The activities in the programme relate to passenger transport, walking and cycling, local roads, state highways, and the movement of freight.

3. Process for considering a variation

The Land Transport Management Act 2003 (the Act)¹ includes provision for changes to some types of activities without the need for a variation to the RLTP. However, this provision does not apply to the proposed new activity outlined below. As a transitional provision the existing RLTP can be varied following the procedure as if it were a Regional Land Transport Plan (refer

¹ As amended by the Land Transport Management Amendment Act 2013.

section 156 of the Act). As such, the process for dealing with requests for variations must be followed.

Section 18D of the Act states that if a good reason exists to do so, the Committee may prepare a variation to its RLTP during the three years to which it applies. This can be at the request of an Approved Organisation or the NZTA, or on the Committee's own motion. In this case, the request has been made by an Approved Organisation and the NZTA.

Section 18D(4) of the Act requires the Committee to consider any variation request promptly.

Section 18D(5) of the Act notes that consultation is not required for any variation that is not significant.

4. Proposed variation

The proposed variation is to commence construction of the 'SH2 Rimutaka Hill Guardrails' project within the final year of the current three year programme.

Proposed activity

It is proposed to install 2.1 km of roadside guardrails, with associated retaining wall construction, on the Wairarapa side of the SH2 Rimutaka Hill Road to reduce the risk of vehicle run off along this high risk section of SH2.

NZTA has already completed guardrail installation on the Upper Hutt side of the Rimutaka Hill.

Proposed timing and cash flow

In the current three year programme, only the investigation and design phases of this project are identified. The construction phase was not initially expected to commence within the three years from 2012-15.

Funding has become available from the National Land Transport Fund, and because this project is construction ready, NZTA is now in a position to commence construction in the 2014/15 financial year.

The proposal involves bringing the construction phase forward into the final year of the current programme 2014/15. The cost associated with completing the guardrails project is \$1.3 million.

The project will be nationally funded and NZTA advises that it will not affect any other projects in the current National Land Transport Programme (NLTP).

Details of the proposed variation for inclusion in Table 3 of the existing RLTP are set out in **Attachment 1**.

5. Determination of Significance

Officers have assessed the significance of the proposed variation, for the purpose of consultation, against the RLTP significance policy.

The significance policy is set out in section 7 (page 36 and 37) of the RLTP 2012-15.

In making a determination of significance (against the criteria set out in section 7.3 of the RLTP), officers considered the following factors:

- The proposed cost variation of \$1.3 million for the new activity is not considered to materially change the overall balance of strategic investment in the context of the \$1.3 billion programme cost.
- The proposed variation would make a positive contribution towards the Government Policy Statement objectives as the subject activity will lead to construction of improvements that will have a significant contribution to road safety.
- The proposed variation is not expected to affect the integrity of the RLTP or its overall affordability.
- NZTA has had ongoing discussions with the South Wairarapa community in relation to the need for the project, including with the recently formed Rimutaka Hill Road Committee. No project specific consultation has been undertaken.

Consideration has also been given to the likely consequences, costs and benefits of carrying out consultation in relation to the subject variation. The need for the project is well established and the cost of consulting on the variation (ie. on bringing forward the construction timing) would significantly outweigh the benefits.

As such, officers consider that the proposed variation to the RLTP is not significant and does not trigger the requirement to carry out consultation.

6. Next Steps

If the Committee agrees to the variation request, it will then be forwarded to GWRC for approval at its Council meeting on 17 March 2015. As is the case with the RLTP itself, GWRC must either accept the recommendation or refer the variation back to the Committee, with a request that it be reconsidered.

Once the variation has been approved by GWRC, the variation is then forwarded to the NZTA for consideration of inclusion in the NLTP for funding.

There is no obligation for the NZTA to vary the NLTP by including the new activity. However, it must give written reasons for any decision not to do so. In this case, the NZTA has made the request and has indicated that it will look to add the SH2 Rimutaka Hill Guardrails project to the current NLTP.

7. 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. Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

7.1 Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report are subject to the legislative requirements of the Land Transport Management Act 2003. Section 18D(5) of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 requires the Committee to determine if a proposed variation to the RLTP is significant, in accordance with its significance policy adopted under 106(2) of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 and included in the programme.

An assessment of the variation against the RLTP significance policy is set out in section 5 of this report and concludes the matter does not trigger the requirement to carry out consultation.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Agrees to recommend to Greater Wellington Regional Council that the Regional Land Transport Programme 2012 – 2015 be varied to include the proposed activities to Table 3, as set out in Attachment 1.***

Report prepared by:

Natasha Hayes

Senior Transport Planner

Report approved by:

Luke Troy

Manager, Corporate Planning

Report approved by:

Jane Davis

General Manager Strategy
and Community
Engagement

**Attachment 1: Variation to Wellington Regional Land Transport Programme 2012 – 2015:
SH2 Rimutaka Hill Guardrails**