

## By Email

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Tēnā kōrua,

### **Support for Te Utanganui – Central New Zealand Distribution Hub**

Thank you for your letter dated 21 July, requesting Greater Wellington Regional Council's (Greater Wellington's) continued support for Te Utanganui. Efficient, resilient, and sustainable freight connections are essential to sustaining the Wellington Region's economy. Greater Wellington is a majority shareholder in CentrePort, which provides a vital transport connection across the Cook Strait for central New Zealand's supply chain. Located only 142 kilometres from Te Utanganui via road and rail, CentrePort is a strategic port partner of Te Utanganui.

Greater Wellington is pleased to confirm our continued support for Te Utanganui and for the updated Te Utanganui Strategy and Roadmap 2025. As stated in your letter, Te Utanganui will provide positive benefits to the Lower North Island and the Wellington Region, supporting the economic efficiency, resilience, and environmental sustainability of the national and inter-regional supply chain network.

There are strong alignments between Te Utanganui's refreshed strategy and other strategies and plan operational within the region – we have set out some of these below.

### ***Alignment with Wellington Region strategies and plans***

- Te Utanganui centres its vision on the values of resilience, reliability, sustainability, and efficiency, which aligns strongly with the [Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2021](#) 30-year vision for the region: “A connected region, with safe, accessible and liveable places – where people can easily, safely and sustainably access the things that matter to them and where goods are moved efficiently, sustainably and reliably.”
- The Wellington Region has reflected the importance of freight in the policy set of the current RLTP, with policies centred on well-connected economic growth and productivity areas that support resilient and efficient access for freight – well aligned with Te Utanganui's goals to future-proof resilient and productive supply chains for the future. The Wellington RLTP 2021 also included Ōtaki to North of Levin Expressway improvements (listed as a key enabler of Te Utanganui) as a project of inter-regional significance that enables efficient connections between the main freight hubs in the lower and central North Island.

- Te Utanganui’s focus on building sustainability into its long-term planning – including by leveraging existing and potential renewable energy sources as part of its commitment to reducing emissions within the national supply chain network – supports the overall reduction of emissions, to which heavy freight is a significant contributor. Reducing transport-generated emissions is a key focus of the Wellington RLTP, with a headline target to reduce emissions by 35 percent in the region by 2030. The [Wairarapa-Wellington-Horowhenua Future Development Strategy](#) and [Wellington Regional Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway](#) also recognise the importance of reducing emissions from freight (which are among the fastest-growing in the transport sector) by supporting opportunities to transition to lower carbon freight modes. By integrating KiwiRail’s Regional Freight Hub, Te Utanganui will promote better use of mode integration and the use of rail for long-distance freight, which will have the benefit of reducing freight emissions inter-regionally.
- Findings from a [Regional Industrial Land Study](#) recently undertaken in the Wellington Region also reinforce the strategic importance of Te Utanganui, noting that Wellington’s capacity for additional industrial land is constrained, particularly within urban areas. Future opportunities for industrial development are expected to emerge along the SH1 corridor to the north, alongside growing export traffic from the Wairarapa. Locating a freight hub at Palmerston North provides a natural connection point between these areas and the port at Wellington, ensuring efficient movement of goods that accommodates for future growth.

As preliminary work progresses on the Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2027, we anticipate that improving the efficiency of inter-regional freight connections will be a continued focus for the Wellington Region going forward. In collaboration with Taranaki, Horizons, and Hawkes Bay Regional Councils and Gisborne District Council, Greater Wellington’s Regional Transport team has produced a [working paper](#) on the current state of freight in the Lower North Island. The paper’s findings support Te Utanganui’s strategic importance as a centrally located, multi-modal freight transfer hub that will ensure CentrePort is efficiently connected to the rest of the North Island.

We look forward to staying involved and would welcome opportunities in the future where we can collaborate on Te Utanganui and the benefits it will provide for the Lower North Island.

Ngā mihi



Daran Ponter  
**Heamana Te Pane Matua Taiao | Chair Greater Wellington Regional Council**

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