

THE WEST COAST REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST COAST REGIONAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JUNE 2019 AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GREY DISTRICT COUNCIL GREYMOUTH – COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM

PRESENT:

A. Robb (West Coast Regional Council – Chair), J. Harland (NZ Transport Agency), D. Havill (Westland District Council), P. Haddock (Grey District Council), N. Clementson (West Coast Regional Council), G. Howard (Buller District Council)

IN ATTENDANCE:

N. Costley (West Coast Regional Council), M. Duff (Buller District Council), M. Sutherland (Grey District Council), A. Kaye (Grey District Council), P. Connors (NZ Transport Agency),

1. Apologies:

W. Costello (Department of Conservation), K. Jackson (Westland District Council),

Moved (Clementson/Howard) that the apologies be accepted.

2. Confirmation of Minutes dated 18 October 2019

The Minutes of the last meeting of the RTC were confirmed.

Moved (Harland/Haddock) That the Minutes of the West Coast Regional Transport Committee meeting, dated 18 October 2018, be confirmed as correct.

Carried

3. Matters arising from the previous Minutes

P. Haddock questioned the action that has been undertaken in regards to pinch points across the region, and whether there are any planned to be fixed prior to the next tourist season? Noted that he is still receiving calls from truck drivers concerned about areas where they have to cross the centreline. P. Connors said that they are aware of them, they are on the list but they do not meet the priority to be funded at this time. P. Haddock noted that some of these pinchpoints only need a 'hair cut', and look to be an easy job. P. Connors requested that complaints are forwarded to NZTA. D. Havill noted that he was also receiving feedback on this matter.

No other matters raised.

4. Request to vary the West Coast Regional Land Transport Plan 2018-21

Speed management is a high priority of the current government in order to reduce fatalities and serious injury crashes. NZTA is requesting each of the RTC's to vary their RLTP's to include their region specific state highway speed management guide implementation. This will then unlock funds to undertake this work.

P. Haddock noted that there had been some discussion in the media around this. J. Harland said that Minister Genter has ruled out a blanket speed ban. Will be looking at this matter region by region and the areas of risk. If the variation goes through then it will unlock funding for NZTA to look at speeds, ground truth issues and work through a proposition that is consulted on before finally being gazetted. There is a good process around it. P. Haddock agreed with the concept as long as it is not going to impact long stretches of road that shouldn't be as this could instead increase driver frustration. D. Havill noted his concern about how the variations in speed may affect the length of time to a destination and the length of time truck drivers can drive.

Moved (Howard/Harland) That the West Coast Regional Transport Committee:

1. Notes that the following state highway activity is proposed as a variation to the Regional Land Transport Plan:
 - a. West Coast SH Speed Management Guide Implementation
2. Determines that the requested variation is not significant.
3. Agrees to vary the Regional Land Transport Plan by adding the above proposed activity to Table 9 – “Activities included in the West Coast Regional Land Transport Plan” in the RLTP.
4. Recommends the variation and change to the West Coast Regional Council.

Carried

5. Buller District Council transport matters

G. Howard spoke to the items outlined in his letter which were matters raised at various consultation meetings on the BDC Annual Plan. G. Howard noted that the footpath work had commenced around the swing bridge near Reefton which he was very pleased to see.

G. Howard noted that the public safety concerns around Ngakawau/Hector came up a lot during their Annual Plan consultation. There was also concern regarding the speeds through Hector and a digital speed sign is sought for this area.

Discussion around the Rough River highlighted its importance to contribute to the overweight over-dimension route and for transport oversized equipment. GDC are about to commence a present value end of life report to determine when the bridge requires replacement, however are looking at upgrading options firstly. Bridge is 83 years old. N. Clementson commented on the challenges involved with transporting oversized equipment around the region. The Stillwater Underpass is narrow and low and cannot be used. J. Harland requested that the sums involved in the cost for transportation detours are included in the business case.

G. Howard noted that there was no resolution sought for the matters raised in the letter, instead they wanted to bring the letter to the table to ensure they are noted. A request was made that a response is provided from NZTA following the RTC meeting.

6. Transport Special Interest Group and South Island RTC Chairs Group Update

N. Costley provided an update on the work progressing at the Transport Special Interest Group and South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group. J. Harland requested potential dates for when will see the RLTP review material come through.

Moved (Haddock/Clementson) That the RTC receives this report.

Carried

7. Economic development

K. Stratful provided an update on several economic development initiatives in the tourism and freight space and their potential impact on the transport network. There is a proposal to rename the West Coast State Highway to align with the Untamed Natural Wilderness branding. K. Stratful also noted that he is providing input into various groups in regards to using the appropriate data to ensure that the right outcomes are achieved.

Tourism West Coast have completed a review on the West Coast as to visitor type etc. The FIT rate continues to increase with now almost 90% of all tourists travelling as FIT as opposed to coach tours. The coach tours are not going to the places the tourist’s want in the region. Tourism growth is reducing back to the standard 5% from the 14% experienced following the Untamed brand launch. The Chinese market is also slowing down.

There remains potential new business opportunities which could generate significant new freight task to the transport network on the West Coast and its connections with Canterbury. There are issues in trying to move this via alternative modes. A. Robb noted that this was a good update and a key issue for the future will be in ensuring that the increased freight is on the most appropriate mode.

7. Road Safety Update

The Chair of the Road Safety Committee had sent his apologies. N. Costley provided a brief update on the re-tendering of the contract for the next financial year. To date Ivan Wilson (through TPP) has done very good work promoting driver safety around the region during the term of the current contract which expires at the end of June this year.

8. Ms Karen Dow's petition to Parliament on drugged drivers

N. Costley presented the paper around the petition to parliament on drugged drivers. G. Howard questioned why would follow through on recommendation 2. J. Harland provided more detail around this in being that the petition only sought one outcome. The Ministry of Transport Discussion Document is taking a holistic approach to the issue and is seeking to identify the best possible way in which to manage this problem. The wording of recommendation 2 was to be amended to better reflect that the RTC supports her intent but recognising that the petition does not go wide enough.

J. Harland noted that 1 in 3 people driving are affected by drugs whether they be prescription or recreational.

Recommendations

Moved (Howard/Clementson) That the West Coast Regional Transport Committee:

1. Agrees to write to Ms Dow to extend members' sympathies on the loss of her son and provide information on its decision at this stage.
2. Support the intent of Ms Dow's petition at this stage pending the outcomes of the Ministry of Transport work on changing the drug driving testing and enforcement system
3. Works with other RTCs to ensure a consistent approach across the sector to respond to this matter and Ms Dow's petition.

Carried

9. Updates from NZTA

J. Harland provided two updates to the RTC. These included the:

- Safe network system – the SNP work is anticipated to save 160 deaths and serious injuries per year. The West Coast network is in better shape than some others due to work invested through visiting drivers work. The focus on the top of the South, including the West Coast, will come in 2020/21. The variation approved today will help to identify those areas that need the work.
- RTC update – this included a briefing on the changes to funding priorities, although this has had little impact on the West Coast the programme underway, urban mobility and mode shift, investment decision-making framework, streamlining the business case approach and travel demand management.

J. Harland also noted the survey being circulated now and encouraged all present to provide feedback.

RTC members made a number of comments following the presentations. P. Haddock believes that the inconsistency in the markings on NZ roads is contributing to accident rates. These markings are confusing in situations such as determining when it is safe to pass. J. Harland noted that some work upgrading the markings had been completed in Queenstown and that there was potential to consider this for the West Coast.

P. Haddock questioned who's responsibility it was to ensure that areas alongside the road are maintained in a fit state to allow for trucks and other vehicles to pull over safely. Many of them are full of pot holes and are dangerous or non-inviting. P. Connors said that this is something for the maintenance contractor and would follow up.

D. Havill noted his concern re the amount of water on the roads during rain events.

N. Clementson noted the improvement in drivers pulling over in the Lower and Upper Buller Gorge as a result of new signage having been installed.

P. Haddock noted that the 'bump' in the road following the improvement works undertaken east of Arthurs Pass is causing issues.

K. Stratful queried the management of loose rock that falls onto the road and appears to be just swept to the side of the road, raising the concern that this material would just be washed back onto the road in another heavy rainfall episode. P. Connors noted that that rock is swept to the side of the road to provide a bund type of protection to reduce the ability for other material to fall onto the road.

J. Harland introduced Leanne Scott who is providing comms support to Jim and Pete.

10. Review of the West Coast Walking and Cycling Strategy 2009

The late item was discussed. K. Stratful noted that there is a PGF project to review the cycle trails on the West Coast. While this is to the side of what was being proposed in the letter from Active West Coast, this project will provide background information to the wider Strategy. J. Harland recommended that the walking and cycling strategy be reviewed as part of the development of the next RLTP as it will inform planning and potential spending. The RTC supported this approach.

N. Costley to respond to Active West Coast updating them on the work underway and how the RTC will address the review of the strategy as part of the next RLTP review.

11. General business

K. Stratful raised the interesting ideas from McKinsey and Co about the future of transport – disruption technologies suggesting that the future is air and that road strategies can be dumped in the future.

Given the likelihood of this being the last RTC meeting of the current members A. Robb took the opportunity to acknowledge and thank J. Harland for his contribution and support, especially with what has been going on internally with NZTA. Jim has served the West Coast very well and is thought of highly throughout the region. A. Robb also thanked P. Connors before acknowledging the good relationships around the table and thanking the wider committee members for all of their efforts.

G. Howard also endorsed the work and support of both J. Harland and P. Connors. G. Howard noted that it had been great to be involved in the work of the RTC and the progress that had been made.

J. Harland thanked the contributions from both G. Howard and A. Robb. Transport is all about connecting communities. J. Harland noted that while there isn't always agreement the RTC do like to work together.

P. Haddock also indicated his support to the above acknowledgements noting that at time the feedback and comments may sound harsh but believe it is their role to relay these messages. The improvements have seen on the network, particularly in recent years, have been great. Implementation of the passing lane strategy and the construction of the new Taramakau Bridge have been the icing on the cake.

D. Havill noted that this was his last meeting, as well as acknowledging the amount that has been achieved over the past three years. He drives over the new Taramakau Bridge every day and acknowledges how great it is. The Mingha Bluff work is also a significant safety improvement.

Meeting closed at 12.04

Actions

- RTC members to direct concerns (phone calls etc) re the network (pinchpoints) to NZTA
- NZTA to respond to BDC letter in Agenda
- N. Costley to provide RLTP review timeframes to J. Harland
- N. Costley to draft letter to Ms Dow
- N. Costley to draft response to Active West Coast
- P. Connors to follow up with contractor on management of pull over areas on the state highway