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Christchurch City Council submission on the *draft Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-34*

Introduction

1. Christchurch City Council (the Council) thanks the Canterbury Regional Transport Committee (the RTC) for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) 2024-34.
2. The Council acknowledges the work completed by RTC members to date to identify the opportunities and challenges facing our regional transport system over the next ten years and the priorities for the land transport system across the Canterbury region. We would particularly like to acknowledge the RTC for identifying the significant \$4.6 billion funding gap facing our region's transport system and the ongoing advocacy to central government through its Chair, Peter Scott, outlining our desire to partner to address this.
3. The Council supports the overall direction of the draft RLTP. While we recognise that changes to the draft will likely be required following the upcoming release of the new Government's revised 2024 Government Policy Statement on Land Transport, we welcome the focus on the priority areas identified in the draft RLTP.
4. These priorities are well aligned with the priorities for transport identified through the Council's current LTP process. In particular the priorities to: create a well maintained network; support and develop connected public transport and active transport networks; manage risk of exposure to extreme events; and implement safer systems. To that end, the Council confirms that it will be providing a revised list of its own transport projects via a variation to the RTC.
5. The Council, however, has one specific concern that it wishes to raise with and provide evidence in support of to the RTC through this submission process: the significant drop in the regionally significant improvements rankings for the Pages Road Bridge renewal project.

Submission

Regionally significant improvement prioritisation – Pages Road Bridge Renewal Project

6. The Council requests that the RTC re-considers the regionally significant activity ranking of Pages Road Bridge Renewal project. The Pages Road Bridge project is the Council's top ranked resilience project and we are of the view that its high risk profile warrants further regional significance consideration.
7. The Council acknowledges that a prioritisation process has been completed by both transport officers and the RTC to identify transport projects and programmes of regional significance for inclusion in this draft. We are, however, concerned to see the significant drop in priority (from 1st in the previous RLTP to 12th in the current draft) of the Pages Bridge Renewal project. In particular, in favour of more low risk resilience investments.

8. As the RTC will be aware, the Pages Road Bridge is a key lifeline route into and out of New Brighton. A particular high impact risk is the potential for a tsunami event originating from the Hikurangi Trench near Kaikoura. The threat of a Tsunami is very real. Technical advice prepared to support the development of the case for this project to date, estimates that there is a 26% chance of a magnitude 8 or greater earthquake in the Hikurangi subduction zone within the next 50 years. If this were to eventuate New Brighton residents would have a very limited window, approximately one hour, to evacuate safely. By implementing this project, it is estimated that the traffic egress enhancements proposed alongside the bridge renewal could potentially save a significant number of lives in the event of a catastrophic tsunami.
9. The area's exposure to potential climate-related impacts also demands a heightened focus on resilience measures. The Pages Road Bridge project involves raising the elevation of both the bridge and the road corridor west of the bridge to reduce the risk of flooding. The road corridor currently has flooding issues, but this is expected to worsen because of sea level rise. Emerging research from GNS Science in October 2023 also indicates that the project area has increased subsidence rates because of the 2010/11 Canterbury earthquakes, which increases the risk of flooding.
10. The Pages Road Bridge Renewal Project represents a substantial level of investment in the New Brighton area and is a significant part of the Council's planned programme of work. The bridge renewal and associated enhancements will also support a number of private investment ventures planned for the New Brighton area. In consultation with their community, it is also a long-standing priority project for the Waitai Coastal-Burwood-Linwood Community Board. The Board are therefore, strongly in support of this submission, in particular, the implications of this project for the heightened well-being and safety of their community.
11. Given the above, the Council believes that this is a project of higher regional significance. In particular, given the significant loss of life risks posed by a tsunami event and the growing body of evidence in support of urgent intervention, the Council requests that the proposed ranking is reconsidered as a priority by the RTC.

Ten year transport investment priorities

12. As noted above, the Council supports the five strategic priorities outlined in the draft RLTP. The priorities demonstrate strong alignment with the Council's strategic priorities and long term plan priorities. We note that the priorities work together to promote a transport system that provides for the needs of current and future generations, and we support the prioritisation of interventions that deliver benefits across multiple objectives to achieve this.
13. Maintenance of our current assets and looking after what we've got is a concern and focus for the Council, and we are strongly supportive of the creating a well-maintained network priority. We note that there is increasing international recognition that maintaining what we have is more worthwhile than building new infrastructure in the long term. We also support the priority to manage the risk of exposure to extreme events. This is a priority across Christchurch and especially on Banks Peninsula, where heavy rain events have caused slips and flooding leading to road closures, and where sea-level rise will have a large impact over the coming years.
14. Investing to achieve a step-change in public transport service provision and integrating land-use planning along public transport corridors is a key transport priority for the Council over the next 10 years. It is pleasing to see the inclusion of proposed NZTA-Waka Kotahi investment to progress the Mass Rapid Transport business case, the Hornby Hub and Corridor development, and the high regional significance prioritisation of the Greater Christchurch Public Transport Futures improvement programme.

Conclusion

15. The Council thanks the RTC for the opportunity to submit on the draft RLTP. As noted above, we anticipate some changes to this draft following publication of the revised draft of the 2024 GPS Land Transport which may necessitate further engagement with Councils ahead of finalising this plan. The Council will also provide a revised list of Council transport projects for inclusion in the RLTP to the RTC following submissions and Council deliberations over the Council's Draft Long Term Plan (2024-34).
16. We consider the draft RLTP in its current form to be a well thought out representation of the transport issues facing the Canterbury region. We look forward to the RTC further reconsidering the regional significance ranking of the Pages Road Bridge renewal project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission.

For any clarification on points within this submission please contact lynette.ellis@ccc.govt.nz

Yours faithfully,



Pauline Cotter
Deputy Mayor of Christchurch