

MIN-4263 Northwest Rapid Transit

20 July 2023

The Minister's Office has requested more information about the brief update that will be given to Auckland Council's Transport and Infrastructure Committee on 20 July regarding the Northwest Rapid Transit (NWRT) project.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

- At Auckland Council's Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting on Thursday 20 July 2023, Waka Kotahi will be presenting to the committee on a number of projects.
- The presentation will be delivered by Steve Mutton, Director Regional Relationships and Randhir Karma, Regional Manager System Design.
- During the presentation, 5 minutes will be spent on NWRT.
- Steve and Randhir will speak to 5 slides (Attachment 1) which will give the Committee a high-level overview of the Northwest Rapid Transit project and discuss how Waka Kotahi can best engage with them.
- The discussion will cover:
 - the scope of the Detailed Business Case (DBC) and what will be investigated
 - what rapid transit in the northwest would deliver for Aucklanders and how it would fit in with the wider rapid transit network story
 - the engagement process and the opportunities to keep the Committee well informed and across the detail of the project.

Background on Northwest Rapid Transit

- Waka Kotahi and partners are re-commencing work on Northwest Rapid Transit (NWRT) with a DBC with public engagement to begin in August 2023 (timing to be confirmed).
- The purpose of the NWRT project is to provide a fast, frequent and efficient public transport option to the northwest of Auckland, from Brigham Creek to the City Centre, alongside State Highway 16 (SH16).
- This will be an important part of Auckland's public transport infrastructure to facilitate growth in the northwest, provide attractive and equitable transport choice, and encourage mode shift. This project will help to reduce reliance on private vehicles and help to build more resilience in the network while contributing to a healthier transport system that protects the climate.
- This mahi is being led by Waka Kotahi in partnership with Te Kawerau ā Maki, and other interested iwi. We are collaborating closely with Auckland Transport and Auckland Council who, along with iwi representatives, have members on the project steering committee.
- We have established representatives from Te Kawerau ā Maki at kaitiaki level who form part of the project team as well as the steering committee.
- The investment objectives of the project are:
 - providing an attractive, equitable rapid transit service that improves access to social, cultural and economic opportunities and is well integrated with the current and future transport system
 - a transport intervention that reduces Auckland's carbon footprint
 - supporting a compact urban form and enabling quality integrated communities.

- The DBC process will confirm a recommended way forward for the project. The DBC will:
 - confirm recommended mode and route for the NWRT, for an integrated light rail, or independent bus solution
 - confirm staging (and any triggers) of recommended options
 - ensure affordable and stageable solutions are at the heart of what we are doing.
 - Provide clarity on how this corridor interfaces with the wider rapid transit network and urban aspirations for the region
 - provide a compelling investment case for the recommended option.
- Further planning work will integrate rapid transit within Auckland's public transport system. Other key projects in the pipeline or underway for Auckland's rapid transit network are Auckland Light Rail (ALR), the Eastern Busway, City Rail Link (CRL) and rapid transit for the Northwest. Separate business case processes are in development for Auckland's rapid transit network, including for CBD to Mangere (ALR, led by Auckland Light Rail Ltd), CBD to Albany (WHC, led by Waka Kotahi), and CBD to Kumeu (the Northwest, led by Waka Kotahi).
- Confirmation of the final mode, Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail, is required and this must consider any potential future development and potential mode switch as continued growth occurs along the corridor. Transport demand for various scenarios of the wider rapid transit network will also be assessed, including a NWRT-only scenario.
- The overall route alignment and stations placements along the NWRT corridor will be assessed with consideration to respective urban hubs and business developments, as well as key local feeder bus routes that will need to be established to support the project outcomes.