

1 Introduction

This Scoping Report has been prepared by Opus International Consultants Ltd (Opus). It is the first report prepared for Transit NZ under Contract No. TNZ 266PN. The aim of the study is to identify potential improvements to State Highway 1 (SH1) between Pukehou Bridge, north of Otaki; and MacKays Crossing to the north of Paekakariki. The geographical extent of the study area is shown in Figure 1.1.

For some time, Transit NZ has recognised that SH1, north of Wellington, does not adequately cater for peak traffic demand and that this may damage the regional economy and adversely affect the local communities living close to the road. The high levels of development planned on the Kapiti Coast in coming years mean that even after the capacity of rail services is increased and the Western Link Road is constructed, SH1 will continue to suffer from congestion and delays unless further interventions are introduced. A further aspiration is that future highways' improvements will improve network reliability and enable improved management of infrequent network incidents to minimise congestion and delays.

The final output of the study will be a long term programme of work for achieving a four-lane SH1 through Kapiti. This will incorporate a robust strategy for improving and managing SH1 in the short, medium and long term. The recommended strategy will incorporate options and linked groups of options that together support the objectives of the New Zealand Land Transport Strategy and the Regional Land Transport Strategy. In doing so, the strategy will take account of the needs of the Kapiti Coast Community in a manner that facilitates and supports current and future land use as well as contributing to local strategic objectives. Regional stakeholders will be consulted throughout the development of a strategy to ensure that these objectives are adequately considered

1.1 Study Area

Kapiti Coast District is located on the south western end of the north island approximately 50km north of Wellington. The district has a total population of 46,200. The majority of this population live in the four main settlements of Otaki, Waikanae, Paraparaumu and Raumati. Waikanae and Paraparaumu serve as the District's primary service centres.

The study area follows the corridor from just north of Otaki south to MacKay's crossing extending between the coast and the foot hills of the Tararua ranges. The nearest major centres outside the study area are Levin approximately 20km north of Otaki and Porirua, approximately 30km south of Raumati. Historically, the Kapiti coast has also had a functional relationship with Wellington.

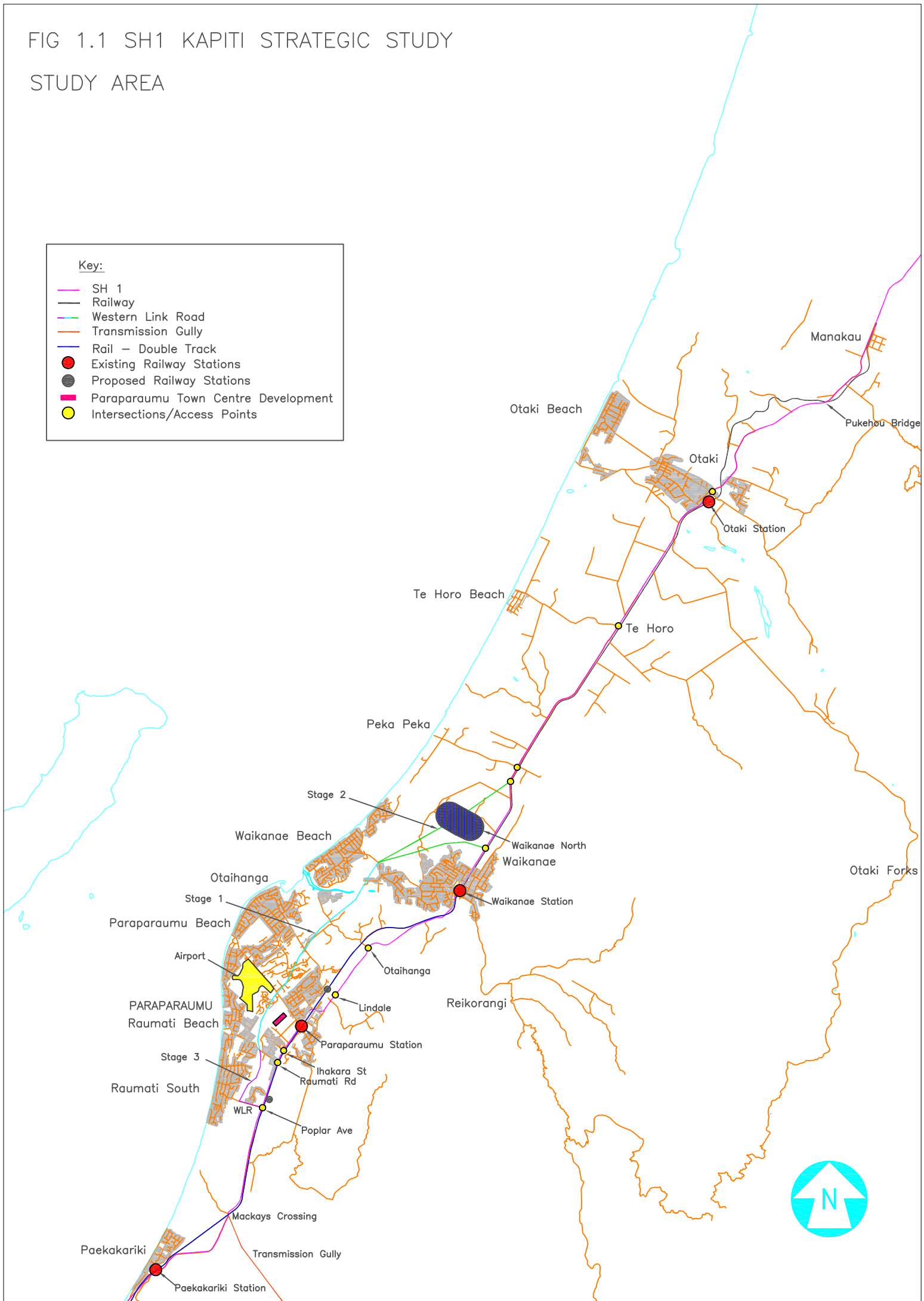
The topography of the study area is consistent along its length with relatively flat plains between the coast and the hills. The distance from the coast and the Tararua foothills ranges between 1.5km and 7.5km.

FIG 1.1 SH1 KAPITI STRATEGIC STUDY

STUDY AREA

Key:

- SH 1
- Railway
- Western Link Road
- Transmission Gully
- Rail – Double Track
- Existing Railway Stations
- Proposed Railway Stations
- Paraparaumu Town Centre Development
- Intersections/Access Points



SH1 and the NIMT Railway are broadly parallel to each other running north - south through the district part way between the coast and upland areas. These links form the primary strategic transport infrastructure which currently serves the local centres as well as providing for national and regional journeys through the district. There is also a regional airport in the ward of Paraparaumu. At present it is predominantly used for short inter-regional journeys and for recreational flights. There are no strategic sea ports for freight or passenger journeys within the study area.

1.2 Background

Several completed studies have investigated improvement options for the transport corridor linking Wellington and the north along the Kapiti Coast. Local residents have been consulted on options to improve SH1 and the Transit NZ Board have agreed a preferred four-lane alignment for SH1 from Peka Peka to north of Otaki.

The Western Corridor Study, completed in 2004, considered several options for multi-modal enhancements to the transport corridor. One of the study's key recommendations: that rail capacity be increased between Waikanae and Wellington; will be implemented by 2009. The Western Corridor Study also found that even with rail enhancements, road upgrades were needed. Local community response to consultation was supportive of widening SH1 to four lanes through Paraparaumu as far north as Waikanae.

In identifying an improvement strategy from Peka Peka to MacKays Crossing which draws support from stakeholders and local communities, this study must therefore build upon the findings of completed studies and the results of community consultation. The recommended strategy must take account of previously identified issues, committed development and infrastructure improvements including:

- Waikanae to MacKays Crossing Rail Double Tracking;
- Increased frequency of rail services;
- New and / or enhanced railway stations (including opportunities for Park and Ride);
- Waikanae North Development;
- Paraparaumu Airport Development;
- Paraparaumu Town Centre Development;
- Proposed Western Link Road; and
- Other committed changes to the local road network.

Previous studies have shown that, through necessity, a significant number of motorists use SH1 for relatively short, local trips. The recommended strategy will address the strategic objective of reliable and efficient long distance journeys on SH1 and the need to provide access to local services. The balance between these aspirations will be guided by national, regional and local policies for development and informed by the current aspirations of local communities.

As part of their work to develop a Long Term Council Community Plan, Kapiti Coast District Council have consulted with local communities to find out how they would like their community environments to develop. The Council has used this feedback to develop Local

Outcome Statements for the settlements in the district. For some of the communities the relationship between the form and function of their settlements with the transport systems serving them was identified as being critical to the future success of the communities.

1.3 Study Objectives

The aim for the study, as defined in Transit NZ's scope of services for contract 266PN, is to:

“develop a long-term plan for SH1 through Kapiti that provides for the sustainability of the highway while facilitating strategic, planned connectivity with the Kapiti community and the passenger transport network. The long term plan for SH1 will compliment the committed rail upgrades to achieve a balanced transport network on Wellington's Western Transport Corridor.

The study will consider interaction with the local road network including the Kapiti Western Link Road (KWLR). Connectivity along SH1 will be planned and controlled in a way that “locks in” the SH1 benefits of the KWLR.”

To guide the future direction of the study and help achieve these aims, the study team has developed planning objectives (see chapter 9) that implementation of the recommended strategy will achieve. The planning objectives were developed following a workshop attended by representatives of regional stakeholder organisations.

1.4 Scope and Structure of this Report

The main outputs of this report are:

- **Policy rationale** that demonstrate the links from national, regional and local policy objectives to those for this strategy;
- An initial catalogue of **planning constraints** and other planning issues that will influence the formulation of a realistic and achievable strategy;
- Well defined, transparent **strategy objectives** developed to withstand external scrutiny and that can be used to test the effectiveness of potential improvement options;
- A sufficient understanding of current aspirations for development that will form the basis for developing an **evaluation framework** that meets the needs of both national and regional funding agencies as well as local communities.

This report provides a basis for developing a consensus between stakeholders and from which to move the project forward. Documenting the constraints within which options must be developed and highlighting the rationale and development of planning objectives and an evaluation framework provides transparency for future decision making and will enable Transit NZ to obtain balanced and informed input that is documented for future reference. This will be crucial to the success of the project given the importance of developing improvement options that are supported by all stakeholders. The report is structured around these outputs.

1.4.1 Overview of Chapters

The chapters presented in this report can be grouped into three themes. Initial chapters (2 to 7) present the context in which the strategy for SH1 is being developed. Chapter 2 identifies policies and legislation that are relevant to the development of Kapiti Coast and its transport infrastructure. The information has fed into the formation of strategy objectives. It will also feed into the development of a framework for evaluating potential improvement options.

Chapter 3 documents the design standards to which the highway will be developed. It also presents the findings of an initial review to identify planning constraints (historic, cultural and environmental) along the transport corridor. Section 3.3 summarises the growth and development expected in Kapiti Coast District within the planning horizon and explains how the district may change in future. Chapter 4 highlights, the urban design issues and opportunities for Otaki, Waikanae and Paraparaumu.

Chapters 5 to 8 describe the baseline on which the study will build. Chapter 5 highlights the demographics of the Kapiti Coast and the geography of the district. It gives an overview of the current provision for transport within the District and key statistics that show how people that live in the Kapiti Coast District choose to travel.

Chapters 6 and 7 are focused upon the road condition now and in the future. Chapter 6 presents data relating to existing traffic flows and the results of preliminary forecasts made using the Kapiti Traffic Model for scenarios where no or very few changes are made to State Highway 1. Chapter 7 reports issues associated with safety of the existing State Highway 1 alignment. Chapter 8 summarises previous studies to identify options for developing SH1.

The next two chapters present where the strategy is going. Chapters 9 and 10 use preceding information to develop planning objectives and a basis for evaluating potential improvement options respectively. These chapters represent the key outputs from this phase of the study.

The remaining chapter 11 highlights the key considerations for the Transit NZ, stakeholders and study team as the project is progressed further.