

# MIN-3923 Whakawhanake Kāinga Committee/Urban Growth Partnership for Greater Christchurch meeting

9 August 2022

Minister Wood is attending the Whakawhanake Kāinga Committee/Urban Growth Partnership for Greater Christchurch meeting on Friday 12 August 2022.

We are providing the following information as requested by the Minister's Office.

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## Next steps for Mass Rapid Transit Indicative Business Case (MRT IBC) for Greater Christchurch

We have identified an emerging preferred route connecting Hornby, Riccarton, the central city, Papanui and Belfast (please refer to Appendix 1 for route). To firm this up we are undertaking:

- further technical work with stakeholders to explore land use and transport integration issues at Hornby, which might impact the State Highway 1 (SH1) alignment e.g. adjustments to the strategic freight network around Hornby to enable the development and integration of MRT at the Hornby centre
- considering the impact of the route and proposed transit malls on the adjacent local roading network
- technical work to agree on the location of transit malls, as well as the stop location strategy along the corridor. These will influence areas for intensification as well as wider changes to the public transport network to enable integration with MRT.

Other technical work includes:

- We have completed a mode selection analysis, which has narrowed down the long list to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT). We are expecting to progress this to the next stage of technical analysis in end of September 2022 - to inform the demand, footprint and cost implications between these two modes to round out the economic case and inform the financial case.
- The consultants have also tested the expansion of the MRT corridor to include a route to the airport, and MRT progression to the airport is not recommended at this stage. This is due to trade-offs between the directness of the service and the ability to intensify along the route, which is constrained by the airport noise contours. We are currently looking to improve airport connectivity through enhanced bus network connections between the airport, emerging centres and the city centre.

## Timeline for completing MRT IBC

On 13 May 2022, the Whakawhanake Kāinga Committee<sup>1</sup> noted the staged approach and timeframes to deliver the MRT IBC. Key dates are:

- **Quarter 3 2022:** confirm the MRT preferred route and mode for arterial based option within boundaries of the Christchurch City (Stage 1).
- **Quarter 4 2022:** explore the incremental value for money proposition of expanding MRT to the districts and/ or adopting the heavy rail or limited stop (busway along motorway) scenarios 2022 (Stages 2 and 3); and undertake an engagement exercise using focus groups to inform the preferred option(s).
- **Quarter 4 2022/ Quarter 1 2023:** discussion with key stakeholders and the Waka Kotahi Board informing them on the technical preferred option, with its associated outcomes and risks and seek approval for public consultation.
- **March 2023:** planned public consultation to align with consultation on the Spatial Plan. This will enable the public to consider MRT, and a range of other transport interventions, in the context of the future urban form for Greater Christchurch.
- **Mid-2023:** Following the public consultation, the MRT IBC will be coordinated and finalised in tandem with the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan. Endorsement by the Greater Christchurch Partnership and Council partners on the Spatial Plan and MRT IBC will occur prior to seeking direction from the Minister/ Cabinet on the preferred approach.
- **Q3 2023:** Consideration by the Waka Kotahi Board on endorsement and next steps.

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Growth Partnership for Greater Christchurch

## Speaking points for the Minister

- Rapid transit plays an important role in enabling a more efficient and sustainable urban form and it is important that we support this by changes to the built environment surrounding rapid transit malls/stops and along this corridor.
- We would like to see our local partners making their decision on the best mix of land use that would maximise the transport benefits and urban development opportunities an MRT system as investigated brings.
- Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport has recently shared the draft sub-regional Vehicles Kilometres Travelled (VKT) reduction target for light vehicles set for Greater Christchurch as part of the Emission Reduction Plan (ERP). This is a challenge that requires all parties to work together, to not only bring our VKT back down to 2019 level by 2035, but also to keep it down despite population growth in the future. Integrated land use and public transport is key to how we can tackle this challenge.
- Lessons learned from other urban growth partnerships indicated that bringing the communities along is tricky and would encourage the Whakawhanake Kāinga Committee to consider how best to engage the communities in a meaningful conversation as early as possible.

## Potential Q&As

- **Question:** What do you see as the main benefits of the emerging MRT route?

**Answer:** The main benefits from my perspective are:

- service key prioritised locations (emerging metropolitan centres) to high use destinations within the central city
- relative directness of connecting key emerging centres (Hornby, Riccarton and Papanui) with the city centre, making it more competitive with alternative modes
- well balanced and diverse mix of land uses with opportunities to intensify along the corridor to attract wide range of trips (not just the commuter).

- **Question:** How will MRT deliver a step change in user experience?

**Answer:**

- By providing dedicated right of way for the MRT services along the entire corridor to enable services to run reliably at consistently higher average speeds than other public transport services by avoiding the effects of congestion and conflicts with other vehicles.
- By enabling growth in the corridor by facilitating the movement of more than twice the numbers of people through the corridor without the need to widen the corridor footprint impacting on private property.

- **Question:** How will MRT enable the mode shift needed for Greater Christchurch?

**Answer:** It is important to provide a high level of service for MRT, which means:

- requiring a low level of service for private vehicles on the MRT corridor and potentially areas along the corridor for sustainable modes only.
- offering users travel time reductions relative to other options. The system aims to achieve point-to-point travel times from locations along the corridor to the city centre which is at least as fast as the private car offering today. This MRT will however retain this as growth occurs over the years with private car journey times forecast to increase.

- offering 'turn up and go' frequencies at most times of day, seven days a week. High frequency solutions enable the movement of larger volumes of people, faster travel times, and increased convenience and reduced waiting time for consumers.
  - providing very reliable transport option giving users the confidence and trust that they can get where they need to at the required time.
  - Improve travel choice for more people, to reduce our dependency on private vehicles, not only for commuting but also for recreation and connecting communities
- **Question:** What advantages do Light Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit modes have over other long listed options considered?

**Answer:** The mode options were considered once the emerging preferred route was established. Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail Transit were short-listed as both options provide high capacity along the corridor, integrate well with the street environment, and provide improved passenger journey time, experience and comfort. Both options also have faster on and off boarding time than other options.

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Appendix 1

