

Notice is hereby given that an extraordinary meeting of Horowhenua District Council will be held on:

Date: Wednesday 29 June 2022
Time: 3:00 pm
Meeting Room: Council Chambers
Venue: 126-148 Oxford St
Levin

Council

OPEN LATE AGENDA

MEMBERSHIP

Mayor	B P Wanden
Deputy Mayor	Deputy Mayor J F G Mason
Councillors	Cr D A Allan
	Cr W E R Bishop
	Cr R J Brannigan
	Cr T N Isaacs
	Cr S J R Jennings
	Cr V M Kaye-Simmons
	Cr R R Ketu
	Cr C B Mitchell
	Cr P Tukapua

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Full Agendas are available on Council's website
www.horowhenua.govt.nz

Full Agendas are also available to be collected from:
Horowhenua District Council Service Centre, 126 Oxford Street, Levin
Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom, Foxton,
Shannon Service Centre/Library, Plimmer Terrace, Shannon
and Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō, Bath Street, Levin

ITEM	TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
	REPORTS	
	Strategy and Development	
A.1	Ōtaki to North Levin Highway - Letter of Endorsement on Detailed Business Case	5

Ōtaki to North Levin Highway - Letter of Endorsement on Detailed Business Case

File No.: 22/315

1. Purpose

To recommend that Council endorse the Ōtaki to North Levin Highway Detailed Business Case and send the attached letter to Waka Kotahi (New Zealand Transport Agency) to support the Detailed Business Case when it is presented to New Zealand Cabinet for final approval.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Report Ōtaki to North Levin Highway - Letter of Endorsement on Detailed Business Case be received.
- 2.2 That this matter or decision be recognised as not significant in terms of s76 of the Local Government Act 2002.
- 2.3 That the Horowhenua District Council endorses the Ō2NL Detailed Business Case and direct Officers to send the attached letter of endorsement to Waka Kotahi prior to the DBC being submitted to Cabinet for final approval.

3. Background/Previous Council Decisions

- 3.1 The Ōtaki to North Levin Highway is a proposed 24km, four-lane median divided highway and shared use pathway between the end of the Peka Peka to Ōtaki (PP2Ō) Expressway and north of Levin. It is the final piece in the Wellington Northern Corridor and will address long standing safety and resilience issues on State Highway 1. The scale of these issues are set out below.
- 3.2 State Highway 1, along with State Highway 57 (within the Horowhenua District), are classified as a High-Risk Rural Roads and have a Star Rating of just 2 out of 5. In the 5-year period to 2021 there were 72 deaths and serious injuries on State Highways within the Horowhenua District.
- 3.3 Despite its significance in connecting Wellington and the rest of the North Island, this stretch of road is plagued by frequent closures, due to both traffic accidents and weather events. However, the only detour (to Wellington) increases journeys by over two hours. The social and economic impacts of closures are significant – currently estimated at over \$2.5M per day. With traffic volumes increasing and climate change making extreme weather more intense and frequent, the number of road closures is likely to increase.
- 3.4 Waka Kotahi has been investigating potential upgrades and new alignment options to address safety and resilience issues on existing State Highway 1 for many years. This culminated in the Waka Kotahi board endorsing in Ō2NL Indicative Business Case (IBC) in 2018. This confirmed an on offline, replacement highway as the preferred approach. In October 2018, after a period of community engagement, Waka Kotahi announced the preferred alignment for this new highway. In 2020, the Ō2NL received funding from the New Zealand Upgrade Programme. Since this time, Waka Kotahi have developed the design through incorporating community and stakeholder engagement, technical input, and partnership with Iwi. A key project stakeholders, HDC have provided feedback on the project detail and design at many stages.
- 3.5 Waka Kotahi have been preparing the Detailed Business Case (DBC) for final approval by Cabinet. The DBC sets out the scope of the project and assesses expected costs and

benefits. Waka Kotahi will be submitting the DBC to Cabinet for final approval in August 2022.

- 3.6 It is noted that the Ō2NL DBC does not include revocation scope, design, or funding. This is to be secured through an alternate process.
- 3.7 Waka Kotahi are seeking HDC's endorsement of the DBC ahead of it being presented to Cabinet for approval.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 Ō2NL is the District's most transformational project. In addition to being the most significant Government invest in Horowhenua in generations, it will dramatically increase the safety and resilience of our transport network – delivering real and tangible benefits for both residents and visitors that move around and through the District. With projected population growth and expected climate change impacts, addressing these resilience and safety concerns becomes even more significant.
- 4.2 In addition to delivering safety and resilience improvements, Ō2NL will support the District's growth and development by unlocking housing growth areas, improving business opportunities, and increasing the range of employment and education opportunities accessible to our community. In addition, improvements to roading networks strengthen distribution and supply chains. As the vegetable bowl of the lower North Island, improving Horowhenua's connectivity to the rest of the country will assist with improving the nation's food security, thus delivering wider wellbeing outcomes.
- 4.3 The strategic importance of Ō2NL is achieving the Council's vision is clear, with Ō2NL being acknowledged and considered in all of Council's key strategic documents, including the Horowhenua Blueprint, the Horowhenua Growth Strategy 2040, the Transforming Taitoko/Levin Town Centre Strategy, and the Ōhau and Manakau Community Plans. In some cases (such as Transforming Taitoko/Levin Town Centre Strategy), Ō2NL will play a key role in unlocking and delivering the objectives in these strategies.
- 4.4 Significant work has gone into reaching this point in the project and the need for it is clearly documented. However, further work is needed to refine the detail and respond to broader implications.
- 4.5 While Officers support the DBC and all fundamental aspects of the project, there is further work to do to refine aspects of the project. These largely relate to matters outside of the Ō2NL alignment itself, such as the need for wider network upgrades (particularly the State Highway 1/Tararua Road intersection) and securing a binding revocation agreement that addresses key issues on the existing state highway (including bridges). Despite there still being work to do in this space, the scale of the benefits the project will offer our community are such that it is important that Council take this opportunity to publically express its support for Ō2NL to Waka Kotahi and to Cabinet.
- 4.6 Endorsing the DBC is not the final opportunity for Council to influence the project. Rather, it is a high level indication of Council's support for the project and will assist with encouraging Cabinet to approve the DBC. Cabinet approval of the DBC will enable Waka Kotahi to move forward to the consenting stage of the project, where design detail will be further advanced.
- 4.7 Ō2NL will be consented (from a District Council perspective) using the Notice of Requirement process set out in the Resource Management Act. Resource Consents will also be required from the Regional Council. This process provides additional opportunities for Council to influence the project, in both the pre-application and hearing stages. This process also involves careful consideration of how to avoid, remedy, and mitigate adverse effects on the environment.
- 4.8 As the project moves into the consenting and implementation stage, there will also be considerable opportunity for Council to work alongside our Iwi partners to support them in

embedding their interests and values in both the Ō2NL project and associated projects (such as revocation).

- 4.8 Considering the above, Officers recommend that Council send the attached letter to Waka Kotahi. The letter endorses the Ō2NL DBC, summarises the key benefits of the project, and notes the key aspects of the project that Council wish to resolve through other processes.

Attachments

No.	Title	Page
A↓	Council Letter of Endorsement for O2NL Detailed Business Case DBC - 28 June 2022	8

Confirmation of statutory compliance

In accordance with section 76 of the Local Government Act 2002, this report is approved as:

- a. containing sufficient information about the options and their advantages and disadvantages, bearing in mind the significance of the decisions; and,
- b. is based on adequate knowledge about, and adequate consideration of, the views and preferences of affected and interested parties bearing in mind the significance of the decision.

Signatories

Author(s)	Lauren Baddock District Plan Lead	
	Daniel Haigh Principal Project Manager	
Approved by	David McCorkindale Group Manager - Customer & Strategy	

28 June 2022

Cabinet Office
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Executive Wing
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Wellington 6011

Emailed to: cabinetoffice@dpmc.govt.nz.

Tēnā koutou Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Hon Grant Robertson, and Hon Michael Woods,

Letter of Endorsement – Ōtaki to North Levin/Taitoko (Ō2NL) Detailed Business Case

The Ō2NL project is the most significant Government investment in the Horowhenua District in generations and will deliver numerous benefits for both our community and the nation. With the Ō2NL project reaching the important juncture of the Detailed Business Case being submitted to Cabinet for final approval, Horowhenua District Council (HDC) wish to take the opportunity to provide our perspectives on the project and demonstrate our overall support and endorsement for the Ō2NL project and Detailed Business Case (DBC).

Executive Summary

HDC endorses the Ō2NL DBC and are committed to working alongside Waka Kotahi to see this project implemented. The Ō2NL project aligns with and supports the Council's vision for the Horowhenua community. This vision focuses on making Horowhenua a thriving and sustainable place that provides opportunities for everybody to live a safe and prosperous life within a clean and healthy environment. A resilient and safe transport network is a key component to achieving this.

HDC supports all fundamental aspects of the Ō2NL alignment, and the aspects of the project contained within the alignment. We note that there is some further work to do to resolve matters related to Ō2NL that are outside of the alignment (such as revocation and the extent of transport network upgrades needed outside of the alignment). As these do not form part of the Ō2NL DBC, they can be secured through other mechanisms and funding streams. We look forward to continuing to work with Waka Kotahi to secure arrangements to address the 'outside' of alignment issues.

HDC also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the action taken by Waka Kotahi to embed Iwi interests and values into the project. We look forward to working in partnership with Iwi to further realise these opportunities as we move forward on Ō2NL and associated projects.

Improving Safety and Resilience

The State Highways that currently pass through Horowhenua have a poor safety record. Despite State Highway 1 being the only north-south route between Ōtaki and Levin (therefore being a key connector between Wellington and the rest of the North Island), it, along with State Highway 57, is classified as a High-Risk Rural Roads and has a Star Rating of just 2 out of 5. The only detour increases journeys by over two hours (more in peak times). The social and economic impacts of any closure are significant – currently estimated at over \$2.5M per day. Despite the significant impacts, this stretch of road is plagued by frequent closures, due to both traffic accidents and weather events. The significance of this is reflected by this portion of the current State Highway having a 5L resilience risk hazard. This rating is

forecast to deteriorate to the highest level of risk possible of 5VL (extreme consequence, very likely) by 2050 due to climate change impacts.

Turning to safety, we note that in the 5-year period to 2021 there were 72 deaths and serious injuries on State Highways within the Horowhenua District. As we know, the ripple effect of these incidents extends far beyond the individuals directly involved – having significant and enduring effects on friends, family, whanau, employers and colleagues. With the District's population alone forecast to increase by 25,500 by the year 2040, this already abysmal safety record will deteriorate further.

In addition to the human impact of accidents, road closures (whether they be due to accidents or weather events) have negative impacts on already stretched supply chains.

With projected population growth and increases in traffic volumes on the State Highway network, Ō2NL is critical to providing an efficient, safe, and resilient State Highway network – particularly being the final piece of the Wellington North Corridor. HDC note that our growth projections (which are currently being exceeded) indicate more significant population growth than the projections used by Waka Kotahi. Therefore, the benefits of Ō2NL may be greater than indicated in the DBC.

Improving Environmental Outcomes

HDC also note that the Ō2NL DBC is one of the first major roading projects in Aotearoa/New Zealand to include a carbon impact assessment. The DBC notes how carbon emissions and climate change have been considered in the Ō2NL project – including by reducing greenhouse gas emissions during construction, improving the resilience of the roading network to climate change, reducing time travels and better supporting alternative transport modes on both the new and the existing State Highway network (for example, inclusion of a shared use pathway on Ō2NL and by reducing traffic volumes on the existing State Highway, making it more suitable for public transport).

Given that Ō2NL is required to address a serious road transport infrastructure deficit, some emissions will inevitably be released during construction and use – however, this has been considered and reduced as far as reasonably practicable with minimal impacts on project outcomes. This project therefore acts as a 'road test' for new ways of thinking when designing infrastructure and will no doubt lead to further innovation in this space. This will be invaluable for future infrastructure projects that will inevitably require the difficult balancing of long-term climate impacts against more immediate safety and resilience issues. As a new State Highway, designed with an environmental conscience, there are significant opportunities to improve the environmental performance of the State Highway network – thus contributing to the Government's emissions targets.

Improving Prosperity, Food Security, and Well Being

As stated above, the Ō2NL project will deliver numerous benefits for our community, including addressing a dangerous stretch of road and improving resilience in the transport network. This will lead to numerous productivity benefits and will strengthen distribution and supply chains. As the vegetable bowl of the lower North Island, improving Horowhenua's connectivity to the rest of the country will assist with improving food security thus delivering wider wellbeing outcomes. These benefits extend well beyond the Horowhenua District boundary providing prosperity and wellbeing benefits to the wider Manawatū-Whanganui region and the nation.

Horowhenua is part of the Wellington Regional Growth Framework, demonstrating the opportunities that exist within Horowhenua to address serious housing shortages within the Wellington region. However, realising this opportunity relies heavily upon Ō2NL improving the District's proximity to Wellington. Ō2NL will support District growth, unlock the potential of housing growth areas, improve business opportunities, and increase the range of employment and education opportunities accessible to our community.

Next Steps and Conclusion

To conclude, HDC reiterate our support for the Ō2NL project and the DBC. We look forward to continuing to work with Waka Kotahi to progress Ō2NL and secure arrangements to address the 'outside' of alignment issues, including:

- Wider network upgrades, particularly the State Highway 1/Tararua Road intersection;

- A binding revocation agreement that addresses key issues on the existing state highway, including bridges;
- Consideration of how the revocation agreement can contribute to Council's strategic documents.

We have written to Waka Kotahi separately on this matter.

HDC are also committed to continue working alongside our Iwi partners to see their values and interests realised.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the matters raised in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Nā mātou noa, nā

Horowhenua District Mayor and Councillors

Copy to:

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New Zealand