

OC240499

6 June 2024

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request below, email dated 8 May 2024, about rail improvements and upgrades.

*"I would like to request information about rail improvements/upgrades for the New Zealand rail network. In particular, I am inquiring about the regional rapid rail project - are you considering it? Are you also going to add more rail lines in the near future? (5-15 years)"*

#### Information about Rail Improvements/Upgrades for the New Zealand Rail Network

It's great to hear you are interested in New Zealand's rail network as part of our wider transport system. As you may be aware, the rail network:

- a. is almost 4000kms long
- b. facilitates 36 million metro rail journeys in Auckland and Wellington each year
- c. carries around 12% of New Zealand's total freight
- d. transports around 25% of all exports, and
- e. moves more than 19 million tonnes of freight each year.

There is a lot of publicly available information about the investment undertaken to improve and upgrade the rail network over the last few years. You can find out more about this investment in the current [Rail Network Investment Programme \(2021 - 2024\)](#). The next Rail Network Investment Programme (2024- 2027) is currently being considered.

#### Regional Rapid Rail Projects

We are not currently considering any regional rapid rail projects.

On Monday 27 May 2024 you clarified the specific rail projects you are interested in. We look at them below.

The [Auckland to Hamilton Rapid Rail Project \(H2A Project\)](#) was explored over the 2018 – 2020 period, and further information is available on the Ministry's website hyperlinked above.

[Future Proof](#), is a partnership between councils, the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), other central government agencies and iwi groups. It looks at how the Waikato would develop into the future and has focused on developing its Future Development Strategy (FDS). Although the FDS

does not specifically consider rapid rail, it does identify rapid transit as the preferred approach for the Hamilton metropolitan area. The FDS also recognises the [Te Huia rail service](#) and investigations into rapid rail.

The *Inquiry into the Future of Inter-Regional Passenger Rail in New Zealand* was done by the Parliamentary Transport and Infrastructure Committee in 2022 and 2023. You can access the Committee's report [here](#).

The government is not considering any regional rapid rail project as part of [Christchurch Rapid Transit](#) at this time.

You may also be interested in the [Capital Connection](#) which is a regional rail project.

### The Near Future

I would also encourage you to look at the [Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 - 2034 \(GPS\)](#). The GPS outlines the Government's land transport investment priorities. It guides expense of around \$7 billion from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF), and around \$1.5 billion from local government, each year. This GPS focusses on achieving four key strategic priorities:

- a. Economic Growth and Productivity
- b. Increased Maintenance and Resilience
- c. Safety, and
- d. Value for Money.

The GPS signals investment to the:

- a. busiest and most productive parts of the existing rail network to support efficient movement of freight, and
- b. metro rail networks and the efficient movement of people in Auckland and Wellington.

As you have made a request under the Act, you can ask for an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman, under section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

The Ministry publishes our Official Information Act responses and the information contained in our reply to you may be published on the Ministry website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Thank you for taking an interest in our rail networks and the wider transport system.

Nāku noa, nā



**Richard Cross**  
Director, Investment & Monitoring