

27 July 2022

File Ref: OIAP-7-24633

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2022-089**

I refer to your request for information dated 1 July 2022, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 4 July 2022. You have requested the following:

*“The Observer (30.6.22) states support for double-track Pukerua Bay-Paraparumu rail line. This query relates only to peak travel times. There is plenty of room outside peak travel hours. Please advise the basis for th idea, ie:*

1. a What is the distance, Pukerua Bay to Paraparumu?
1. b Is it possible and cost effective to widen the tunnels?
1. c What would it cost to widen each tunnel (price for each), Paraparumu - Pukerua Bay?
1. d How long would it take to widen the tunnels then, separately, double track the line?
1. e While work was being done, would trains run? If not, what service would Metrolink provide?
2. Give the number of potential people not travelling by train (at peak hours) because of infrequency of service (underlying assumption -outside peak hours services meet needs - a 20 min gap can be managed, worked around.
3. a What trains, ie times, are fully packed, between Pukerua Bay and Paraparumu at peak hours?
3. b Provide data by day, Mon - Fri and number of passengers, 7-9am and 4-7pm. (Note: fully packed as in Japan where gloved men push commuters in to close doors. They travel, unable to move, to destination).

3. c What constitutes a full train on Wgtn-Kapiti line? Is there a legal number of passengers per car? If so what is it, how often is it reached? On what section of the line? Specify the data for Paraparumu-Pukerua Bay.

4. Give the basis for data used, Mon-Fri, for a double track, and the latest census data, Paraparumu-Pukerua Bay.

5. The Regional Council requires district councils to provide population projection data. This was recently completed. Give the expected increase for Paraparumu and Paekakariki, users, aged 15-65 in 5 years time on?

6.a State if there is other public transport between Paraparumu and towns/villages en route to Wellington, private or publicly owned.

6. b If so, detail names and services in peak times.

6. c Is there a bus service Paraparumu-Pukerua Bay? Has GWRC considered this as a peak-time option – cheaper and quicker than a double track? If not, why not?

7. Has GWRC looked at the cost of running peak hour express buses both way, between (a) Paraparumu and Pukerua Bay or (b) Paraparumu and Wellington via Transmission Gully.

8.a What information has GWRC on the cost of, demand for, interest in, double tracking a line to Otaki? If no research has been done, why not?

8. b What response has GWRC given to KCDC requests for a rail-link, Waikanae to Otaki?

8. c When Waikanae-Otaki line goes in, what is the \$ difference between double and single track?

8. d When the Otaki line is operating, are there enough trains for a service every 20 min? If not how often?

8. e What is the distance, Waikanae to Otaki?

9. a It was said the train stopped at Waikanae because passengers pee themselves after an hour- there are no on-board loos. Now Waikanae has 2 Exeloos at the station, weak-bladdered can use them then get the next train, so that excuse has gone. What's the latest reason to make Otaki residents pay the same rates to GWRC but to get excessively fewer services – no trains, fewer buses?

9. b Why would the already serviced Pukerua Bay-Paraparumu line be double tracked instead of providing a service for Otaki?"

**Greater Wellington's response follows:**

The response to each part of your request is provided below.

*1.a. What is the distance, Pukerua Bay to Paraparumu?*

Approximately 18.8 kilometres by road and approximately 18 kilometres by rail.

*1.b. Is it possible and cost effective to widen the tunnels?*

Yes, it is proposed to duplicate the railway line between Pukerua Bay and Paekākāriki. This would require a tunnel to be daylighted (ie removed), and widening through the installation of retaining walls. The length of the single-track section is currently approximately 6 kilometres long. It is believed relatively easy to halve the single-track section to approximately 3 kilometres long, through widening and daylighting tunnels at each end.

The recently completed Wellington Rail Programme Business Case, considers a two-step process. Firstly, reduce the extent of the single track as much as easily possible, and secondly completely remove the single-track section. Please see item 12, report 22.243 in this link <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2022/06/Updated-agenda-and-reports-for-Council-30-June-2022.pdf>. This contains a paper on the Wellington Rail Programme Business Case and the executive summary. The full business case will soon be made publicly available on our website.

*1.c. What would it cost to widen each tunnel (price for each), Paraparumu - Pukerua Bay?*

The cost to undertake full duplication of this section of track is currently estimated at \$1.3 billion.

*1.d. How long would it take to widen the tunnels then, separately, double track the line?*

It is expected within the Wellington Rail Programme Business Case that this section of railway would be fully duplicated by 2035. The detail of how this will be undertaken has not yet been worked through, and funding has not yet been secured.

*1.e. While work was being done, would trains run? If not, what service would Metrolink provide?*

This part of your request is refused under section 17(e) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) on the grounds that this level of detail has not been established and therefore the information does not exist.

*2. Give the number of potential people not travelling by train (at peak hours) because of infrequency of service (underlying assumption -outside peak hours services meet needs - a 20 min gap can be managed, worked around).*

This part of your request is refused under section 17(g) of the Act on the grounds that the information requested is not held by Greater Wellington Regional Council and there are no grounds for believing that the information is either held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

*3.a. What trains, ie times, are fully packed, between Pukerua Bay and Paraparumu at peak hours?*

During COVID-19, peak trains are generally not operating at full capacity, however Metlink is anticipating that patronage will increase. Please refer to the link above for information on patronage in the Wellington Rail Programme Business Case.

*3.b. Provide data by day, Mon - Fri and number of passengers, 7-9am and 4-7pm. (Note: fully packed as in Japan where gloved men push commuters in to close doors. They travel, unable to move, to destination).*

This part of your request is refused under section 17(g) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 as the information requested is not held by Greater Wellington Regional Council and there are no grounds for believing that the information is either held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

*3.c. What constitutes a full train on Wgtn-Kapiti line? Is there a legal number of passengers per car? If so what is it, how often is it reached? On what section of the line? Specify the data for Paraparumu-Pukerua Bay.*

For journey times longer than 30 minutes, our service standard policy recommends Metlink should attempt to provide seats for all passengers.

Each 2-car unit provides 147 seats.

The capacity capability of a train is larger than what typically the trains will be loaded to. We consider a typical maximum load of 246 people in a 2-car unit. This means there may be up to 99 people standing within a 2-car unit.

Due to COVID-19, peak trains are generally not operating at full capacity, however, as advised above Metlink is anticipating that patronage will increase. Please refer to the link above for 'Growth Context' projections in the Wellington Rail Programme Business Case.

*4. Give the basis for data used, Mon-Fri, for a double track, and the latest census data, Paraparumu-Pukerua Bay.*

Please refer to the link above for information on Wellington's Rail Programme Business Case. Refer to report 22.243 which begins on page 13, and the Wellington Rail Programme Business Case executive summary which begins on page 23. The executive summary provides some data and insights. Further data can be viewed when the full business case is made publicly available.

*5. The Regional Council requires district councils to provide population projection data. This was recently completed. Give the expected increase for Paraparumu and Paekakariki, users, aged 15-65 in 5 years time on?*

Please refer to the link above for information on Wellington's Rail Programme Business Case. Refer to report 22.243 which begins on page 13, and the Wellington Rail Programme Business Case executive summary which begins on page 23. The executive summary gives the expected growth context on page 24.

*6.a. and 6.b. State if there is other public transport between Paraparumu and towns/villages en route to Wellington, private or publicly owned. If so, detail names and services in peak times.*

Yes:

- Capital Connection rail service between Palmerston North and Wellington is currently operated by KiwiRail.
- InterCity which is a privately owned company operates bus services between Paraparumu and Wellington.

*6.c. Is there a bus service Paraparumu-Pukerua Bay? Has GWRC considered this as a peak-time option – cheaper and quicker than a double track? If not, why not?*

There is not a specific Metlink bus service from Paraparumu to Pukerua Bay. The volume of people that can be transported by bus is very limited in comparison to a train. Each 8-car train operating every 15 minutes during peak hours, provides seating capacity for 2,300 people per hour. To transport the equivalent number of people by bus would require approximately fifty-eight (58) 40-seat buses. Each of these 58 buses would require a driver compared with a crew of just 4 for a single 8-car train.

*7. Has GWRC looked at the cost of running peak hour express buses both way, between (a) Paraparumu and Pukerua Bay or (b) Paraparumu and Wellington via Transmission Gully.*

No – this has not been costed out. As indicated above, this would not be a practical solution for the volume and distances involved.

8.a. *What information has GWRC on the cost of, demand for, interest in, double tracking a line to Otaki? If no research has been done, why not?*

Metlink recently completed a Detailed Business Case to improve rail services between Wellington and Palmerston North (and also between Wellington and Masterton). If progressed, this will provide rail network improvements including additional passing loops between Waikanae and Palmerston North, new rolling stock, and enable increased services between Wellington and Palmerston North, including Otaki, Levin and Shannon.

The Lower North Island Rail Integrated Mobility 2021 (LNIRIM) Detailed Business Case can be found on Greater Wellington's website at: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/document/19521/detailed-business-case-lower-north-island-rail-integrated-mobility-2021>.

Funding support was sought from the Crown for the 2022 Budget. Unfortunately, this was unsuccessful. Greater Wellington Regional Council is continuing to work with the Crown on this proposal.

8.b. *What response has GWRC given to KCDC requests for a rail-link, Waikanae to Otaki?*

Refer to the LNIRIM Detailed Business Case (link in 8a above).

8.c. *When Waikanae-Otaki line goes in, what is the \$ difference between double and single track?*

There is an existing railway line between Waikanae and Otaki, and the Capital Connection is the current passenger rail service operating on it. A detailed cost to duplicate between Waikanae and Otaki is currently not available, however, this is currently being considered by KiwiRail as part of a Network Capacity Study.

8.d. *When the Otaki line is operating, are there enough trains for a service every 20 min? If not how often?*

Currently there are not enough trains to operate a service between Wellington and Otaki only. The Capital Connection currently stops at Otaki.

The LNIRIM Detailed Business Case proposes to provide 4 peak and 2 inter-peak return services between Wellington and Palmerston North (stopping at Shannon, Levin, Otaki, Waikanae, Paraparaumu, and potentially Porirua). The Detailed Business Case includes purchasing new rolling stock and associated infrastructure upgrades to deliver this.

8.e. *What is the distance, Waikanae to Otaki?*

Approximately 15 to 16 kilometres by both road and rail.

9.a. *It was said the train stopped at Waikanae because passengers pee themselves after an hour- there are no on-board loos. Now Waikanae has 2 Exeloos at the station, weak-bladdered can use them then get the next train, so that excuse has gone. What's the latest reason to make Otaki residents pay the same rates to GWRC but to get excessively fewer services – no trains, fewer buses?*

Greater Wellington's Public Transport Rate used to fund public transport is a targeted rate that varies around the region to take account of the relative levels of service and benefits received in different parts of the region. Generally rural and outlying areas of the region pay a reduced Public Transport Rate compared with more intensively serviced areas of the region such as Wellington city.

9.b. *Why would the already serviced Pukerua Bay-Paraparumu line be double tracked instead of providing a service for Otaki?*

As indicated in the links referred to above, it is proposed to provide services to Otaki, and to increase the capacity of the railway network through the removal of key infrastructure constraints, like the single-track section between Pukerura Bay and Paekākāriki.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Samantha Gain  
Kaiwhakahaere Matua | General Manager Metlink