

Regional Transport Committee meeting - 1st February 2012

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The meeting today got underway at 1005hrs.

Chairman John Bain welcomed all for attending. John hoped that this year would produce something for Northland with advantages to us all.

Mr Bain also explained the emergency exits and restroom facilities that were available.

Apologies (Item No 1) were received for Chris Powell, Transport Operations Senior Programme Manager, who was overseas in South Africa, at his mother's funeral. *Our condolences Chris; to you and your family, at these tough times.*

Conflicts of Interest (Item No 2) and the chair stated that any 'Conflicts of Interest' were to be advised item by item as they progressed through the agenda and any appropriate action to be taken.

Mr Bain also explained the emergency exits and restroom facilities that were available.

Time now 1006hrs and Item No. 3. at 1006hrs, **Confirmation of Minutes** of Regional Transport Committee Meeting 7 December 2011.

Cr Joe Carr wanted to thank Mr Stephen Town for taking councils concerns on driving licenses to the next stage.

Mr Stephen Town, NZ Transport Agency, replied that there had been some compromise for the people in Northland. The agency had agreed to do a different test. There was to be a trial conducted in Kaitaia to see if it will be successful. The test will be longer, hopefully taking in some extra skill elements needed for the test to be acceptable. A community based program was to be set up for applicants to complete the 120 hours practical driving experience needed for the test with it not being a financial challenge. Mr Howeth Mountain, Access and Mobility representative asked why this all has been done back to front; there was no consultation before the changes to graduated and restricted drivers licenses was made by NZTA.

Mr Stephen Town explained that national agencies sometimes adopt plans on a 'one size fits all basis'.

Mr Howeth Mountain explained that 40% of country areas were affected by the changes.

Mr Ken Rintoul Economic Development representative, queried about some time ago Mayor Brown saying there was an amnesty every five years for driving licenses.

This was duly discussed.

On to **4.0 Information Reports** at 1017hrs.

Item No.4.1 Regional Road Safety Update

Inspector Clifford Paxton Safety and Security representative gave some details. It was pleasing that road deaths were down to 7 last year which was a significant drop on previous years. There was however concern that there had been 3 road deaths already in Northland, in 2012.

Ian Crayton-Brown, NRC Transport Projects Officer wanted to acknowledge the work done by Inspector Clifford Paxton and his traffic section.

Item No. 4.2 (1022hrs) Bay of Islands Airport Review

Mr Tom Baker, Far North District Council representative, advised that the Far North District Council were to contribute \$165,000-00 p.a. for 5 years to the Bay of Islands Airport upgrade.

Cr Joe Carr asked Tom Baker if they, the FNDC were going to support in the Long Term Plan that the Northland Regional Council (NRC) matches it.

Cr John Bain advised that the sub-committee has done a pretty good job; they wanted to relay our thanks to the sub-committee to this point. They will now present their findings to the Regional Council allowing them to proceed to the next step. He asked if Tom could get written confirmation from FNDC of their intentions.

Mr Ken Rintoul Economic Development representative insisted that thanks go to Malcom Nicholson (NRC's new CEO) for his work at far north Holdings and also for MP Mike Sabin getting on board with this project. Ken requested that they get a time line for this project; then they can present it to government.

It's now 1027hrs Item No **5.0 Decision Reports**

Item5.1 Draft Northland Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-2015 (1027hrs)
Vaughan Cooper, Growth and Infrastructure Manager, gave an update on this item.

John Bain opened it up for **General Business** at 1035hrs.

Mr Stephen Town advised the meeting that there was going to be an increase on 1st March for the use of the Northern Gateway toll road.

The new fee for cars was to be \$2-20. There will be updated signs and these will provide more details than the previous ones. Stephen advised that the toll road traffic numbers for the Puhoi tunnel were approximately 10,000 per day in winter and rose to 18,000 per day in summer. *(Don't those make the estimates used for the Lower Harbour bridge loan in Whangarei look great? The figures quoted originally, when subsidy applications were discussed, was up to 30,000 vehicles per day. I personally, with my wife, did traffic counts on the Riverside Road and the largest traffic volume in rush hour*

was 1048 per hour. It doesn't flow at that rate for long. I believe an honest assessment on traffic flows on that particular road would be between 7200 to 7900 per day. Is that well below the figures used for subsidy application? But then again we are not traffic planners so what would we know?)

Mr Steve Westgate Environmental Sustainability representative suggested that the system of toll collection must take into account the tourists that use the toll highway as setting up toll accounts would be impracticable to them.

Mr Ken Rintoul had concerns in regards to Whangarei District Council doing road widening on Mangakahia Road near Twin Bridges and the dumping of rock from this project. He advised that a project that FNDC was undertaking with a corner needing fill some 3kms up the road could be using this product that was being dumped and suggested better liaison between councils to prevent wastage and costs.

He also had concerns at the quality of roads under construction in Northland not being good with many needing repair even before they are even opened. Money is being wasted in repairs. *There is an old saying "Do it once, do it right"* Ken quoted some instances where money could be saved if the jobs were done to a higher standard.

Mr Tom Baker queried the re-designation of State Highway One and State Highway 10. Some clarity was given by Vaughan Cooper on this issue.

John Bain closed the meeting at 1100hrs thanking all for attending.

I must again say it John, a good way to round the meeting off. Pleased to see this as sometimes there are issues that members present wish to openly discuss and possibly don't get discussed as some may think they don't warrant the formalities of a motion.