

Regional Transport Committee meeting - 7th December 2011

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)

The meeting today got underway at 1002hrs.

Chairman John Bain welcomed all for attending. Mr Bain also explained the emergency exits and restroom facilities that were available.

Conflicts of Interest 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.

Apologies (Item No 1) were received for Tony Norman and John Bain also welcomed Chris to the meeting. (I think Chris ? was the NZ Police representative)

Time now 1004hrs and Item No. 3. **Presentations.** Item 3.2 was to be taken before 3.1

Item No. 3.2 High Risk Rural Roads Strategy (1004hrs) Mr Martin Taylor from NZTA (New Zealand Transport Agency) gave this presentation. The strategy's aim was 'A safe road system, increasingly free of death and serious injury'

Questions were asked by Far North Mayor Wayne Brown (present for this meeting), Mr Tom Baker - Far North District Council, Cr Joe Carr and Mr Ken Rintoul - Economic Development representative.

Mr Stephen Town, NZ Transport Agency, gave some added advice on budget allocation questions.

Mr Steve Westgate, Environmental Sustainability representative commented that 'loss of control on bends' was a major issue.

Item No. 3.1 Lower Hatea River Bridge (1030hrs)

Whangarei District Council Roading Manager, Jeff Divine gave a presentation on the Lower Hatea River Bridge. He explained how the 'risks and gains' were to be shared between council and the contractors.

Mr Tom Baker had a query regarding the high tensile steel for the bridge.

Cr Joe Carr queried the funding.

Far North Mayor Wayne Brown asked 'what did we miss out on to get this through?'

Cr John Bain explained that time was getting on and there was a lot to get through and there was no time for questions as Steve Westgate attempted to ask one. Was time really running out of time, or was John Bain shutting it down for the WDC officials present, to stop those nasty awkward questions coming in?

I will attempt to answer the questions; As far as funding goes; normally councils get 63% from NZTA for projects but a deal was done by the WDC dropping it to only a 50% subsidy to get the project through hence costing the Whangarei ratepayers about \$3.7 million more than need be.

What did we miss out on? A cleaner healthier harbour if council had focused on fixing the long overdue sewerage issues and used funding there. But no it is probably not that important to them; they rather prefer to build monuments in an attempt to attract visitors. A clean green environment on our most precious asset, the harbour, I'm sure would attract more.

Item No. 3.3 Asset Management Planning on State Highways (1056hrs)

Mr Steve Mutton, NZTA Regional Asset Manager gave a power point presentation. He explained it was a Nationwide Plan ensuring money went to the right areas with a focus on route security and rural routes.

Mr Greg Martin, Whangarei District Council, asked a question regarding a figure of 50,000 in the report. It was explained that was the traffic count for traffic through Whangarei. Greg you should know that as WDC Infrastructure Chairman; remember they reckoned there were 30,000 traffic movements to/from Onerahi and Whangarei Heads to town each day, that's why they needed a Lower Hatea River bridge.

Remember all those residents don't all go to town each day (school and retired), some don't drive (minors) and most vehicles carry 1.8 people on average, so do you think they may have fudged their figures to claim a subsidy? I reckon if 10,500 used that road a day that would be a generous estimate.

[Link to Onerahi Statistics](#) and Whangarei Heads population is 5630 according to WDC website.

Far North Mayor Wayne Brown and Mr Tom Baker asked questions on route security. Cr Joe Carr had a query on funding available.

Mr Ken Rintoul questioned having a long term dedicated route for Northland. There needed to be designated the whole of the stat highway network for future proofing.

Oh, they must be ahead of schedule now, as John Bain is allowing questions, or was my hunch about shutting up questions on the Lower Hatea Bridge correct???

Item No.4 at 100hrs, **Confirmation of Minutes** of Regional Transport Committee

Meeting 5 October 2011 - (1116hrs)

No discussion was entered into on this item.

On to 5.0 Information Reports the Information Reports at 1117hrs

Item No 5.1 Regional Road Safety Update

Mr Howeth Mountain, Access and Mobility representative claimed 'there had been brilliant success on the roads'. He also made mention that the figures showed the 40+ age were the greatest death statistics not the younger drivers. *I was wondering Howeth. "Who was at fault in these accidents that these death statistic figures show and what age were the people who were actually at fault?" Maybe more information on factual statistics relating to fatal accidents are required, to give more detailed concise statistics?*

Cr Joe Carr (regards to 2nd to bottom paragraph on page 19) wanted to thank the writer of the report, for high-lighting this point to the committee.

Item No. 5.2 (1122rs) Northland Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-2012 - Funding Uptake

Chris Powell, Transport Operations Senior Programme Manager gave a brief on the item.

Cr John Bain reiterated that 'funding was getting less'. *There you are Far North Mayor, Wayne Brown, that's an answer to your earlier question 'what did we miss out on to get this through?'*

Item No. 5.3 (1124rs) Bay of Islands Airport Review

Vaughan Cooper, Growth and Infrastructure Manager, gave an update.

Cr John Bain asked if someone from Far North Holdings should be in this working group.

Mr Ken Rintoul advised that there were already two from FNH in the group.

Mr Ken Rintoul queried if the working group should receive the report on pages 39-40 before it becomes a public and living document.

Vaughan Cooper advised it had been circulated to all members of the working group.

It's now 1130hrs Item No 5.4 Review of Rail in Northland – Progress Report

Vaughan Cooper gave an update on this item. He advised staff have been involved and there is some interesting information on (page 53) Low Floor Wagons and on (page 54) Longer Term Priorities for rail in Northland.

Cr Joe Carr insisted they want to get rail working and if they are to fund it they should ensure that Northland companies have a shot at tenders for wagons.

Cr John Bain was pleased Kiwi Rail now had someone in Northland ‘selling freight’. This was very important for Northland.

Mr Ken Rintoul advised he was not getting the updates on what was happening and could be very embarrassing when negotiating with people on rail.

NRC Chairman Craig Brown asked ‘who is in the working group?’

Cr Joe Carr advised that it was some of Ken Rintoul’s ideas that were creative on this project and emphasised it was unfair if he was not getting feedback.

Item No 5.5 30 Year Transport Strategy – Draft Monitoring Report (1141rs)

Vaughan Cooper gave an update on this item.

On to the **Decision Reports** at 1143hrs

Item No 6.1 Draft Northland Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-2015

Mr Chris Powell gave an update on this and advised it was an update from the last council meeting.

Cr Joe Carr was concerned there was a lot of slippage in the time frames and with less roading going on in Northland and felt our region shouldn’t be disadvantaged.

Chris Powell insisted that they will not be disadvantaged in any way and NZTA was assisting us in every way, keeping it all on time.

It’s now 1150hrs and onto Item No 6.2 Preparation of a Regional Public Transport Plan – Progress Report

Far North Mayor Wayne Brown informed the meeting ‘we have been asked for funding, but we have no public transport’. *Where have you been Wayne? It has been discussed at a number of meetings with Kaitaia Bus About, wanting funding. Surely your representatives who attend these meetings are keeping you informed?*

Cr John Bain advised there is a project in Kaitaia and a 12 month trial is being undertaken.

Far North Mayor Wayne Brown claimed ‘it wasn’t on their radar’.

Cr John Bain advised Wayne he may well need a new radar screen. *Or perhaps a more informative operating representative who can supply the results to you?*

Cr Joe Carr advised that ‘the report’ on the funding project said the Far North District Council supported it.

Acting Chief Executive Tony Phipps explained how there could be targeted rates applied but FNDC may prefer to make a lump sum payment.

Far North Mayor Wayne Brown claimed ‘you have tossed the ball up now, so we know about it now’. *Wayne can I suggest the minutes and agendas of these meetings, you*

request they are sent to you to keep you in the loop, if the message is not getting through via your representatives.

Craig Brown clarified that there had been a service running in Kaitaia. *Wayne take a trip up to Kaitaia and check it out. There is nothing like a bus trip around Kaitaia, you will see more than driving.* Craig continued that there are methods of payment of the local share.

Cr Joe Carr suggested that 'should we (NRC) make a submission to your Annual Plan?'

The recommendation, on page 66, required two to be appointed for a Hearings Committee and Cr John Bain and Cr Joe Carr were duly approved.

John Bain opened it up for **General Business** at 1157hrs saying he had received many calls in relation to people sitting their licence tests in Far North towns of Dargaville, Hokianga and Kaitaia and how they will have to travel to testing offices in Whangarei or Kerikeri and would Stephen Town (NZTA) give some details of the change in the system.

Mr Stephen Town explained the Restricted Driving Licence Testing had some new routes that were to be approved by NZTA. These had originated from the Safer Journey Strategy. The hours of supervised driving had trebled from 40hrs to 120hrs. Minimum traffic density is now part of the test and this situation can only be created in Kerikeri or Whangarei not in other areas of Northland. This is not anything about costs; but about higher standards.

Link to [The Land Transport \(Road Safety and other Matters\) Amendment Bill 2011](#) (see section 11- 22 'Strengthen the Restricted Licence Test' especially Section 18 'Testing Routes')

Cr John Bain claimed people in Auckland who travel to the North for holidays many who have never driven on gravel or at 100km per hour on open roads without centre barriers. *You are so right John; they are used to bumper to bumper traffic sitting waiting on 100km motorways, not taking travelling distances into account (cause if they leave a gap some 'B' shoots into it), No rough unsealed roads, no rural hazards and what are passing lanes (that's where you go like a Bat out of Hell to stop people passing). Also they have to think while driving at higher speeds on open rural roads. That cuts a lot of them out, with no man made controls in place, like merging arrows on motorways etc.*

Far North Mayor Wayne Brown was concerned there would be a higher level of rejection and loose metal driving should be part of all driving tests. He believed these rules were "Ideology driven by Nutters" and not economically driven.

Mr Ken Rintoul made comment that most accidents occur in the wet in the hours of dark and no testing is normally carried out in these types of environments. *Should 100hrs driving tuition be undertaken in wet and dark conditions by drivers suffering from tiredness and other factors? Now here is a brilliant opportunity for someone to design a*

prototype of a simulator that can fulfill all the necessary requirements for driver's licence testing to be performed in. They use simulators for aircraft training and there accident rates are fairly acceptable. But please remember, it was MY idea.

Mr Howeth Mountain suggested they (NZTA) check out other rural areas in New Zealand that will be affected by these new rulings and that may be interesting. He also made comment that this was all 'about people, not policies'

Being no other General Business John Bain closed the meeting at 1210hrs thanking all for the input over the last 12months and advising all to drive carefully over the holiday period.

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.

Interesting also that 'some' are continually texting throughout the meeting; could this be why they may not be as informed as they should be on the subjects before them?