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09 July 2013

Councillor Fran Wilde
Chair - Wellington Regional Transport Committee
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11446
WELLINGTON 6142

Dear Ms Wilde

VARIANCE OF THE CURRENT REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PROGRAMME – ADDITION OF THE PORIRUA LINK ROADS

As a result of the decision by Central Government to advance the expected construction start date for the Transmission Gully project to 2014 by use of a Public Private Partnership, the Porirua City Council (the Council) need to ensure that funding is available at the same time for the construction of the Porirua link roads. The Council has provided for funding its share in its Annual Plan but a prerequisite for the provision of funding subsidy from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) is that the projects must be included in the current Wellington Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP). The 2012-15 RLTP shows them as likely to commence within the next 10 years (Table 5), but the project now needs to be funded earlier. I therefore request an agenda item on the next RTC meeting on 18 September to vary the current RLTP by adding in the Porirua link roads.

The Porirua link roads consist of two new local roads; the Whitby link road and the Waitangirua link road, which will be owned, operated and maintained by the Council. The link roads will connect to Transmission Gully at the grade separated James Cook interchange, which will be located south of the State Highway 58 interchange (see the schematic Figure 1 attached). Transmission Gully and the Porirua link roads are inter-dependent components of the regional and local land transport network. Accordingly, the outcomes from Transmission Gully and the Porirua link roads are inter-related. The Wellington Northern Corridor RoNS Network Plan has the link roads embedded within the Transmission Gully section. The Council has long considered the link roads to be a component of the broader Transmission Gully project, and has carried out full public consultation on the link roads as part of the application to the Transmission Gully Board of Inquiry. The Board, in its decision, confirmed the necessary designations and regional and district consents for the construction and operation of the link roads.

The Council has subsequently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NZTA for the construction of the link roads to be undertaken at the same time as Transmission Gully. This is expected to provide construction and financial efficiencies for both parties. I attach a note summarising the expected investment outcomes from the Porirua link roads as presented to the Board of Inquiry.

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The funding requirement for the project as given in the Porirua Annual Plan is \$35M. For the purposes of the requested variation to the RLTP the cashflow will be:

2013/14 - \$2,266,000
2014/15 - \$2,337,000

The remainder of the cashflow would show in the 2015/18 RLTP as a commitment. Following the decision by the Regional Transport Committee at the September meeting and its subsequent confirmation by the Regional Council, the NZTA, who are supportive of this request, will look to add the project to the current NLTP and to seek funding approval before the end of the year. This should allow contracts to be entered into in early 2014.

The project has been published in the RLTP and has been widely publicised through the Board of Inquiry process. It has a high local profile and strong support from Council and its communities. The Council's Draft Annual Plan 2013/14 identified the intention of bringing forward the funding for the link roads to align with the earlier start of construction of the mainline section of the Transmission Gully project and asked as a key question "Do you support the Council bringing this funding forward?" After considering submissions the Council has adopted the changed timing.

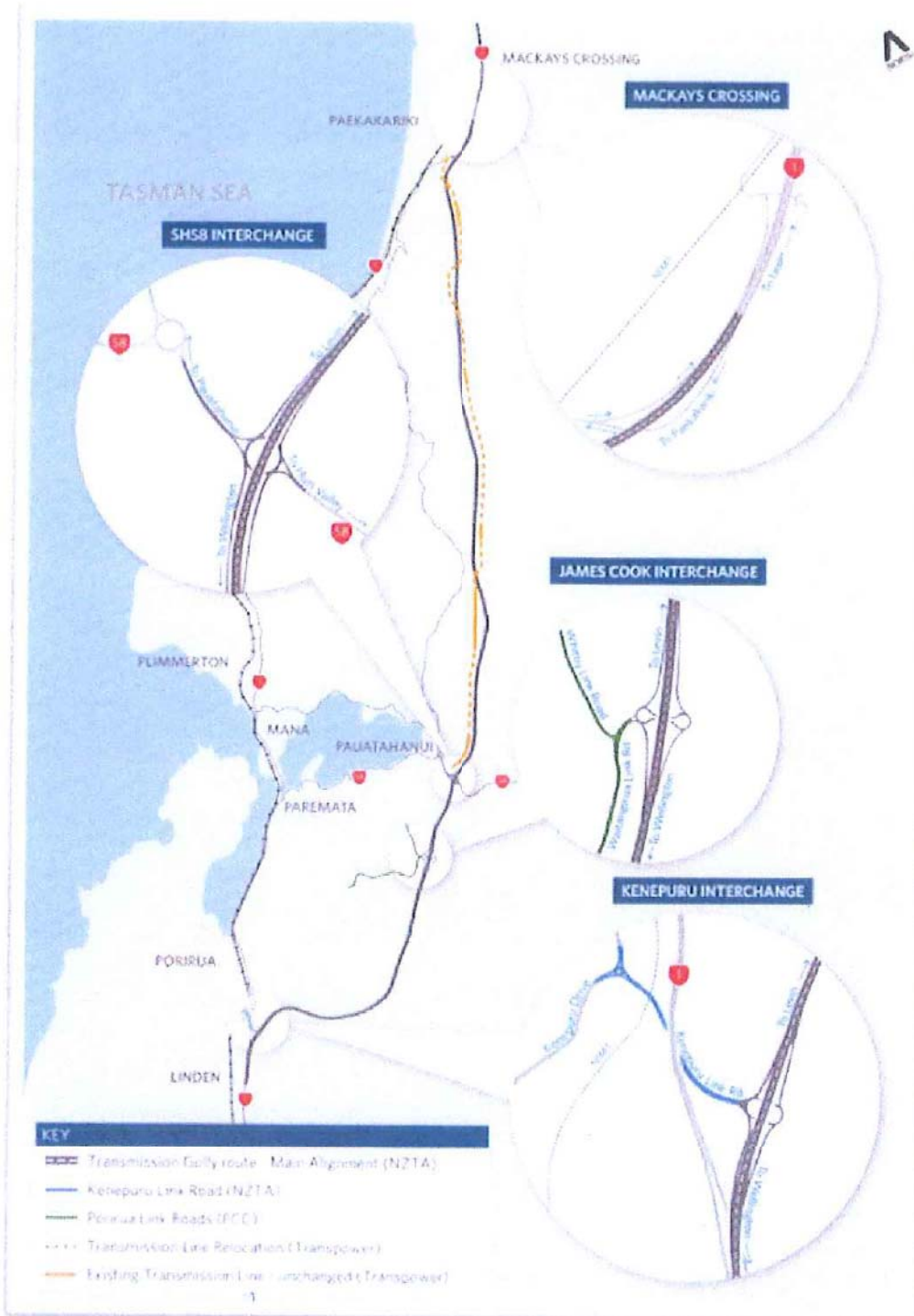
In light of the above, I would not expect it to trigger the RTCs significance policy. The proposed variation is a change in the timing of funding rather than the introduction of a new project which has extensively consulted on and has strong community support. Please contact Peter Bailey on 04 237 1412 for any further information needed as part of this request.

Yours sincerely



Gary Simpson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Figure 1 Transmission Gully scheme design showing PCC Link Roads



Expected investment outcomes from the PCC Link Roads

The PCC's five outcomes for the link roads (agreed in September 2010) are:

1. To provide **more efficient, safer and more reliable road access** between eastern Porirua suburbs and the Hutt Valley, Wellington City and Kapiti Coast.
2. To **improve amenity values and the quality of the environment in Porirua** by encouraging the use of Transmission Gully for regional and inter-regional trips as opposed to the existing SH1 route through Mana, Plimmerton, Pukerua Bay and Paekakariki.
3. To **reduce the adverse effects of traffic on the environment in Porirua** by encouraging the use of Transmission Gully for regional and inter-regional trips, as opposed to roads directly adjacent to the Pauatahanui Inlet and Onepoto arms of the Porirua Harbour.
4. To **provide alternative arterial routes and connectivity within eastern Porirua** suburbs to support an integrated approach to regional and local land transport and development.
5. To **support the development and revitalisation of Waitangirua Village Centre** as a focus for activity within the community by improving connectivity.

The Link Roads are designed to meet all of these outcomes. In particular, the Link Roads will provide significantly improved East-West connectivity and travel time savings between Eastern Porirua and the Hutt Valley and between Eastern Porirua and Wellington, and will relieve pressure on other parts of the PCC local road network.

The network analysis produced for the TG BOI process estimated the following travel time reductions resulting from the link roads¹:

- 7 - 15 minute travel time savings for Paraparaumu - Waitangirua trips (varies by direction and whether travel is in AM or PM peak)
- 3 minute travel time savings for Wellington - Whitby trips (for both directions and in both peak periods)

Traffic modelling predicts 2026 daily traffic volumes on the Whitby and Waitangirua Link Roads to be 3,300vpd and 3,400vpd respectively².

Although the Link Roads will provide greater connectivity from Whitby and Waitangirua to SH58 East, the journey travel times will be unchanged due to the countering effect of increased traffic on SH58, which results from the TG project in isolation of the Link Roads.

The same analysis considered the effects on the surrounding traffic network if the PCC Link Roads were *not* built. In the absence of the Link Roads there would be a decrease in the benefits of the Transmission Gully project as well as localised disbenefits in the PCC network:

- Reduced accessibility to the Eastern Porirua area
- Higher congestion on SH58, James Cook Drive and Discovery Drive
- Worsened environmental outcomes and poorer amenity along these arterial roads.

In the absence of the Link Roads, traffic to and from Eastern Porirua would continue to use the SH58, James Cook/Discovery Drive, and Mungavin Avenue arterials. By 2026, daily traffic volumes would be expected to increase on James Cook Drive by 25%, on Discovery Drive by 11%, and on SH58 West by 42% compared to traffic if the Link Roads were available.

Daily traffic volumes on the existing State Highway 1 (coastal route) would increase by 5% if the Link Roads were not available. Related to this, volumes on Transmission Gully (South of SH58) would decrease by 6-11%. This result would be counter to the desired outcomes from Transmission Gully, which include reducing traffic on the coastal route to the benefit of local communities and improving safety outcomes by providing a safer State Highway alternative.

In addition to environmental and amenity benefits due to reduced congestion, the Waitangirua area is expected to benefit from social and economic outcomes enabled by improved connectivity. These outcomes would come from local revitalisation in the commercial area of Waitangirua village and improved access to labour markets.

The Link Roads design includes elements to support safe travel for cyclists and pedestrians (for example through intersection layouts).
