

To: **Liam Hodgetts**
CC: Moana Mackey, John
McSweeney, Joe Hewitt.

From: Andrew Wharton and
Adam McCutcheon
City Design and Place
Planning

Purpose: Background information/Advice Date: 16/03/2021

Background and current state of play: Rapid Transit Service and the NPS-UD

The NPS-UD directed growth around rapid transit stops

1. The NPS-UD came into effect in August 2020. This was as the Draft Spatial Plan was being prepared for Council approval for consultation.
2. Policy 3 of the NPS-UD 2020 directs intensification within walkable catchments of 'rapid transit stops' and contains a definition of 'rapid transit service' which serve these stops.

rapid transit service means any existing or planned frequent, quick, reliable and high-capacity public transport service that operates on a permanent route (road or rail) that is largely separated from other traffic

rapid transit stop means a place where people can enter or exit a rapid transit service, whether existing or planned.

3. These definitions align with the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport.
4. There are multiple criteria within the rapid transit service definition that need to be met.

MfE officials confirmed policy intent of the intensification directions

5. Council officers held a video conference with Ministry for the Environment (MfE) Officials and specifically asked:
 - if the rapid transit service definition was intended to apply to Johnsonville line; and
 - if this was the policy intent of the NPS-UD.
6. Both points were confirmed by MfE officials.
7. Accordingly, Council Officers modelled walking catchments around each of the stations on the Johnsonville line. A housing typology that gives effect to policy 3 of the NPS-UD ('enable building heights at least six storeys') was applied.

Officers have already recommended a nuanced approach to implementing the intensification direction

8. For consultation in the draft Spatial Plan, Officers recommended:
 - Five minute walking catchments be applied around Crofton Downs, Ngaio, Awarua, Simla Crescent, Box Hill, Khandallah and Raroa Stations.

- Ten minute walking catchments be applied to the Johnsonville railway station.
9. The different application of five and ten minute walking catchments for stations was based on the relative level of 'enablers' that can help facilitate a well-functioning urban environment (such as community facilities, schools, supermarkets, open space). Comparatively, main stations such as Johnsonville have a greater number of enablers relative to the stations which have had a five minute walking catchment applied.
 10. The use of enablers as indicators of growth potential is consistent the centres-based development also used in the Draft Spatial Plan.
 11. Council approved the Draft Spatial Plan for consultation implementing the NPS-UD in this way.

MfE guidance subsequently listed stations on 'Wellington commuter rail services' as rapid transit stops

12. The MfE document 'Understanding and implementing intensification provisions for the NPS-UD' stated "*Examples of existing rapid transit stops include train stations on the commuter rail services in Wellington and Auckland and bus stations on Auckland's Northern Busway.*"
13. Following release of this guidance Council officers asked for written confirmation from MfE officials for further commentary on the application of Policy 3 to the Johnsonville line.
14. MfE officials advised '*Ultimately it is up to local authorities to determine if a route is a rapid transit network*' and suggested Council seek comment from Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Council officers have had regional discussions about the NPS-UD definitions and their application

15. These discussions involved Waka Kotahi, MfE, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, all local authorities in the region and Metlink.
16. A consistent approach to walking catchment modelling is also being explored.

The Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) identifies Wellington Region's rapid transit corridors, including the Johnsonville Line

17. The Draft Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) identifies all commuter rail lines (including the Johnsonville line) as rapid transit corridors and services, in both their current state and future state. The RLTP does not identify specific stops along the corridor.
18. The Johnsonville line stops at all stations. As a 'rapid transit stop' means a place where people can enter or exit a rapid transit service, by definition this means that all stops on the Johnsonville line are rapid transit stops, around which at least 6 storeys must be enabled.

19. The NPS-UD defines “planned”, in relation to forms or features of transport, as meaning planned in a Regional Land Transport Plan.
20. However, the NPS-UD does not use the RLTP to identify where rapid transit lines are. This means district plans can have regard to the RLTP, but are not directed by it, when confirming whether something is rapid transit.

The upcoming One Network Framework will classify commuter rail as rapid transit

21. The One Network Road Classification (ONRC) provides a consistent classification baseline for transport corridors. This is evolving into a new One Network Framework (ONF) to focus on integrated land use and transport planning, led by Waka Kotahi and LGNZ. The ONF was due to be launched last month.
22. The draft ONF states that all metro rail corridors, regardless of services, are “PT1” – corridors where rapid transit services are operated. This document does not have legal weight. It is intended to help standardise how transport corridors are classified and managed.

The reviewed Regional Policy Statement may specify rapid transit services and stops

23. A new Wellington Regional Policy Statement is being drafted by Greater Wellington. Territorial authority planning staff have promoted that this document could also list rapid transit services and stops in the region. District plans must give effect to regional policy statements.

We are providing comments on the Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2021 (RPTP)

24. GWRC has recently released the draft RPTP for consultation. Feedback closes on 19 March, which does not allow enough time for a submission to be signed off by Council. It has been suggested comments should be worked up with the portfolio leader and the Mayor.
25. Joe Hewitt has combined staff technical comments on the RPTP and will bring these to tomorrow’s meeting. Most of the points are definition and clarification matters.

We suggest that MfE provide more certainty in the application of Policy 3 by identifying rapid transit services within the NPS

26. The definition of rapid transit services and stops is contentious because it triggers a process for councils to enable transit-oriented development around those stops. We would like MfE to amend the NPS-UD by including an appendix of the current rapid transit services and stops.
27. This would not stop new rapid transit services being created (for example, as part of LGWM). It would not place any additional obligations on WCC. It would apply a nationally standardised approach to classify and identify these services, which the district plan would then give effect to. Currently, each council is liable to legal and planning challenges on whether a particular service is rapid transit or not. This is inefficient and could result in different interpretations across the country.