

Otago and Southland RTC Chair's foreword

The Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees (RTCs) are pleased to present, for consultation, this proposed mid-term update of the 2015-2021 Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTPs). These plans set our vision of transport in the future and how we - the 10 local authorities in our two regions and the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) - intend to achieve this by funding and providing transport services and infrastructure, and concentrating over the next few years on achieving a safer and more sustainable transport system that supports and enhances regional development.

Covering almost half of the South Island, the Otago and Southland regions share opportunities to improve transport and face common challenges. These shared issues and opportunities led us to jointly develop our Regional Land Transport Plans.

The prosperity of both Otago and Southland, and our quality of life, depends heavily on good land transport infrastructure and services. Our primary industries drive much of the area's economic growth, so good access and freight services linking farms and forests, suppliers, processors and export gateways are critical. Tourism, another major economic driver in Otago and Southland, also depends on quality road links.

Our common challenges include a very large land area and road network but comparatively low rating population in many areas. For the majority of our two regions, the major emphasis in these plans needs to be on maintaining and operating the roading networks, in most cases to existing levels of service. Providing funds to keep the network at similar levels of service to those that exist today is a major challenge. At the same time, unprecedented growth, centred on the Queenstown area, also challenges the ability of ratepayers to fund the massive improvement programme needed to this area's transport system.

Our two regions share many road safety issues. We also face many of the same types of natural hazards, challenging the resilience of our transport networks and our communities.

Many of the projects proposed in these plans will be of wider benefit than just to ratepayers in a single district. These include:

- a suite of changes to the Queenstown and Dunedin transport networks
- two improvement projects on the visitor journey between Queenstown and Milford Sound
- improvement projects on SH1 in Otago and Southland, from Invercargill to Oamaru.

Joining together to create these plans has heightened our awareness that journeys do not stop at administrative boundaries. Many journeys, whether by freight or visitors, span Otago and Southland, and beyond. At a larger scale, there are critical freight and visitor journeys crossing regions, extending along and across the South Island, and connecting to both Stewart Island and the North Island.

Recognising the interconnectedness of South Island regional economies and communities, the chairs of the seven RTCs in the South Island have formed a Chair's Group and a work programme for those matters best addressed at this scale. Chairs agree they can make greater progress toward realising common goals if they work together.

The South Island has a relatively small and dispersed population of around one million. Christchurch is the largest urban area and is centrally located, and there are several other main centres located throughout the island. Small communities are often at a significant distance from main centres, and depend on the products transported to their locality every

day, as well as the ability to move products to be processed, distributed and exported. This makes resilience transport linkages between South Island communities critically important.

As in Otago Southland, the efficient movement of both goods and people is essential to the South Island's economy, and the social and economic wellbeing of its residents. Across the South Island, a large proportion of the freight task is moved by road, with substantial freight growth being projected. Freight demand in the South Island is currently driven by a mix of primary sector and export growth, as well as by population change.

There has also been significant growth in the tourism sector, with the South Island being recognised as a tourism destination, in its own right. These critical freight and tourism journeys do not stop at regional boundaries – they extend across the South Island.

The South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs established a group to significantly improve transport outcomes in the South Island, to help drive our economy and better serve our communities, through collaboration and integration.

The three key collaborative priorities for the South Island Group are to:

- identify and facilitate integrated freight and visitor journey improvements across the South Island
- advocate for an enabling funding approach which supports both innovative multi-modal (road, rail, air, sea) solutions to transport problems, and small communities with a low ratepayer base to maintain and enhance their local transport network
- identify and assess options for improving the resilience and security of the transport network across the South Island, as well as vital linkages to the North Island.

These are to be advanced through a joint South Island transport planning project, co-funded by the regional and unitary councils in the South Island.

For Otago and Southland, the benefits that this update to our RLTPs seeks to realise are:

- improved network performance and capability, and network resilience
- improved safety and reduced social impact of fatalities and injuries
- a focus on areas of regional economic development, productivity and connectivity
- increased customer voice on connectivity, accessibility and mode shifts
- optimisation of the transport system through communication technology, innovation and improved people capability
- greater value for money delivered by transport investments.

To achieve these benefits, we intend to focus on addressing the following problems and opportunities over the next three to ten years:

- Inability to assess, plan, fund and respond to changing mobility user demands in a timely way results in some poor investment prioritisation and decisions, and inadequate future-proofing.
- Attitudes and behaviour together with inconsistent quality of routes in the two regions results in fatal and serious injury crashes.
- Parts of the network are vulnerable to closure from adverse events resulting in economic and social disruptions, of which there is increased recognition.
- Tourism growth creates the opportunity to disperse visitors throughout southern NZ for the benefit of smaller communities.
- The opportunity to create a network of cycle rides in southern New Zealand.
- The opportunity for better integration of rail and coastal shipping at the South Island scale.

We are proud of these collaborations. We would like to thank the participating organisations for their time and assistance in updating these plans, and to acknowledge the hard work of elected RTC members and staff.



Trevor Kempton
Chairman, Otago Regional Transport Committee



Eric Roy
Chairman, Southland Regional Transport Committee

The Government has indicated that an engagement draft of a revised Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018-/19-2027/28 (GPS) will be made available in early 2018. Meanwhile, the Minister of Transport has provided some early signals of likely revisions to the current draft GPS.

At this stage (December 2017), the variations proposed in this draft appear consistent with the signals from the Minister. Some changes might, however, be required to this RLTP variation when the revised GPS 2018 is released.

Please note that cost estimates and timelines for individual activities and projects in this plan are indicative, for the purposes of consultation. They may change, particularly as approved organisations complete their activity management plans and as cost estimates are tightened up as project planning proceeds.

Please also note that the final decision on whether any of the activities proposed in these Otago Southland plans are included in the National Land Transport Programme rests with the NZTA. NZTA is expected to announce the National Land Transport Programme in August 2018.