

17 December 2021

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Kia ora Tony

### **The information you requested – CAS-471846-X7Q8C9**

Thank you for your request for information dated 25 November 2021 about the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) 2021-31's definition of rapid transit, and the exclusion of the Onehunga Line from this definition.

Auckland Transport (AT) has been collaborating on the development of an Auckland Rapid Transit Plan with Auckland Council (AC) and Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency (WK). An early part of this project involved the development of a 'Rapid Transit Baseline' (Baseline), by which these three agencies agreed on a shared understanding of rapid transit in the Auckland context. This Baseline document's definitions are the basis on which decisions were made regarding which services would be included as rapid transit in the RLTP. The Baseline document has also been through the governance of the Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP), which includes representatives from the Ministry of Transport, KiwiRail, the Treasury, and other central government agencies.

Members of the rapid transit plan's working group discussed the interrelationship of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD), the RLTP, and the Baseline's definitions to agree that the Onehunga line did not meet the agreed definition of rapid transit in Auckland. The key criteria that the service fails on is frequency – the Onehunga line only operates services half-hourly, and there are no plans to change this in the next 10 years (i.e., the timeframe of the RLTP). This contrasts with other train services, which will all operate at least every 15 minutes (7am to 7pm, 7 days a week) once the City Rail Link opens. At this point they will meet the Baseline's definition of frequent (and therefore met its definition of rapid transit)

### **Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5**

In answer the first five of your questions, regarding the definition of "quick" (called "fast" in the Baseline), "frequent", "reliable" and "high capacity", the Baseline's definition was used. The full document (Auckland Rapid Transit Baseline - Working Doc.pdf) is attached as per your request, but the relevant criteria are set out below:



### 3.2 Rapid transit is defined by its service characteristics

Rapid transit is:

- **Fast** – rapid transit services offer time-competitive travel with private vehicles, particularly at peak times. This does not require rapid transit to always be faster than travel by private vehicle. It does mean travel times must be close enough that other advantages of rapid transit (such as its reliability) make it a highly attractive option. To achieve this characteristic, rapid transit is generally faster than other public transport services, through provision of a dedicated corridor and wider spacing between stops.
- **Frequent** – rapid transit services form part of the frequent public transport network, and therefore operate at frequencies that enable users to ‘turn up and go’ at most times of day, seven days a week.<sup>i</sup> These high frequencies enable rapid transit to quickly shift large numbers of people and allow for efficient connections between different public transport services.
- **Reliable** – rapid transit services operate with very high levels of reliability and are unaffected by other parts of the transport network. They have priority over other traffic through a dedicated corridor and/or priority at intersections. High reliability helps make rapid transit services competitive with private vehicles. Reliability complements frequency, by ensuring even spacing between services and predictable departure times, which enhances the customer experience.
- **High capacity** – the combination of high frequency and large vehicles able to carry many people means that rapid transit corridors can move significant numbers of people per hour in a relatively small amount of space.

Regarding your fifth question, around the definition of a “a permanent route”, the Baseline assumes that ‘permanent’ means that the service operates regularly (not intermittently, such as on some days of the week but not others) on infrastructure that is intended for its use.

The Baseline’s definition says the following about the quality of that infrastructure:

### 3.4 Rapid transit has total priority

*A key aspect of rapid transit is its ability to always operate reliably, regardless other factors affecting the transport network. In order to achieve this reliability, rapid transit usually operates in corridors that are physically separated from other modes. This results in total priority that enable services to run more quickly, frequently, and safely than other public transport services.*

*These dedicated corridors may operate at-grade, above or below ground, or in a combination. Corridors typically avoid conflicts where they cross another transport corridor through grade-separation. Where rapid transit corridors cross others at-grade, the rapid transit corridor should have priority by way of signal pre-emption (such as level crossings on the rail network). This provides the priority that ensures services can continue at speed and without impacting reliability. Grade separated crossings are generally preferred to reduce risks to other users and minimise the chances of service disruption.*

*AT-grade corridors may be on-street in urban areas, but only where this does not affect the quality of service or have unacceptable safety risks. Generally, this requires dedicated lanes and priority at intersections, although ‘time-segregated’ running may also be an option.<sup>ii</sup>*

## Questions 6 and 7

With regards to your question 6 and 7, there were no “reports, presentations or working papers” other than the Baseline that specifically addressed the status of the Onehunga Line and its stops as it related to their classification (or not) as rapid transit.

The following table from the Baseline outlines how the agencies assessed the existing rapid transit network, as set out in the Regional Public Transport Plan, against the Baseline’s criteria. This was the basis for the classification of the included in the RLTP. Criteria that are green were considered to be met today. Yellow will be met once projects funded in the RLTP are met. Red means the criteria will not be met (either in whole or on parts of the route) within the timeframe of the RLTP:

Service	Fast	Frequent	Reliable	High Capacity	Dedicated Corridor	Shaping Urban Development
Western Line (rail)	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
<i>Travel time and off-peak frequency issues will be resolved once City Rail Link and new timetable are operational.</i>						
Southern Line (rail)	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
<i>Off-peak frequency issue will be resolved once City Rail Link and new timetable are operational.</i>						
Eastern Line (rail)	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
<i>Off-peak frequency issue will be resolved once City Rail Link and new timetable are operational.</i>						
Onehunga Branch (rail)	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green
<i>Frequency limited by single track.</i>						
Pukekohe Connection (rail)	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow
<i>Existing shuttle service and associated infrastructure limit speed (due to transfer), frequency and capacity. Electrification will overcome these issues. New stations, part of the New Zealand Upgrade Programme, will help to shape urban development.</i>						
Northern Busway services (NX1, NX2)	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow
<i>Priority infrastructure does not extend for full length of services. This lack of a dedicated corridor creates delays and reliability issues in the city centre. The impact of these issues on customers is mitigated by the frequency of services. There is limited evidence to date of the busway shaping urban growth, although proposals for intensification near certain stations are emerging.</i>						
 Generally meets requirements		 Deficiencies that will be addressed by funded projects			 Deficiencies that will not be addressed by funded projects	

The Baseline document was completed in early 2020. Some of its references, particularly to work that needs to be done, are now out of date. Work on the Auckland Rapid Transit Plan has progressed and is due to be finalised early in 2022. The Baseline will be incorporated into the final plan.

### **Questions 8 and 9**

Correspondence within AT and between AT, AC and WK regarding your questions these questions is attached. The correspondence, which directly addresses your questions 8 and 9, could be considered brief; this is because all the agencies involved had already agreed that the Onehunga line did not meet the definition of rapid transit, either now or in the planned future, as part of the Baseline's development. Some information such as names have been withheld under section 7(2)(a) of the LGOIMA, to protect the privacy of natural persons including that of deceased natural persons.

Should you believe that we have not responded appropriately to your request, you are able to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman in accordance with section 27(3) of the LGOIMA Act, and seek an investigation and review in regard to this matter.

Yours sincerely



Hamish Bunn  
**Group Manager Investment, Planning & Policy**

Encl: Auckland Rapid Transit Baseline - Working Doc.pdf  
Auckland Transport - CAS-471846-X7Q8C9 Combined emails\_Redacted.pdf

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<sup>i</sup> A true 'turn up and go' frequency would be a minimum of every 10 minutes. Currently, some rapid transit services only achieve this during the peak. The Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) aspires for the entire rapid transit network to achieve this minimum frequency by 2028. The current definition in the RPTP is at least every 15 minutes, between 7am and 7pm, 7 days a week.

<sup>ii</sup> Time segregated running is where sections of space are shared by rapid transit and other modes, and access to these sections is controlled (e.g. by traffic signals) to dedicate the space to rapid transit operations when required