

OIA2024-02

Mr Patrick Dunford

Via FYI.Org

Dear Patrick

I refer to your request dated 5 January 2024, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), asking:

*What is the width of the rail corridor between Addington and Rangiora on the Main North Line? Is it sufficient for double tracking throughout this section and the placement of passenger stations on a double track line?
(Irrespective of any leases of land in the corridor to other parties)*

How much freight traffic is currently carried each year through this section and how many train services daily are needed to transport this freight?

What are the upgrades that are said to be needed in this section for commuter train proposals (presuming a report was done for the Greater Christchurch Partnership)?

Please find our response below.

Corridor width and upgrades required.

Almost all of the Main North Line (MNL) between Addington and Rangiora is over 12m in width, and therefore suitable for double tracking and the installation of passenger stations where required.

There are however three areas where land may need to be purchased if KiwiRail was ever to double track this section of railway corridor.

- at the 3km mark – There is a small section at 3km where the width of the railway corridor is only 10m wide. Land may need to be purchased depending on rail design.
- between 21km – 27km – The railway corridor through this section is located within legal road reserve. The existing railway is protected by section 223 Public Works Act 1928, but any further expansion of the railway would require more land from the road and the survey and legalisation of the entire railway corridor.

Private land may need to be acquired to relocate Paisley Road depending on the rail design.

- at the 27.3km mark – Part of the railway corridor is in legal road. While also protected by statute, as part of any double tracking, part of road occupied by the railway corridor should be legalised as railway land.

It's worth noting that this is all subject to a rail design being completed. There may be structures required such as bridges, culverts, retaining walls, stations/platforms, access points, laydown, substations or parking areas that might result in additional land being required outside the current railway corridor.

There hasn't been a detailed report completed showing what upgrades would be required, i.e. no report was done for the Greater Christchurch Partnership as heavy rail was dismissed as the preferred option for the proposed Mass Rapid Transport

system.

In general, passenger services require a higher standard of rail than freight, or scenic services due to the increased frequency of services, and the higher expectations around on-time performance and reliability.

If you would like to do any of your own research into the rail corridor, KiwiRail has a public GIS website you can use

<https://gis.kiwirail.co.nz/maps/?viewer=kiwirailpropertyview>

Freight volumes

KiwiRail currently operates two round-trip freight services per day, six days per week on the MNL, excluding any additional 'specials' dictated by increased freight demand.

In FY23, between Christchurch and Rangiora the total gross tonnes (including wagon tares) were 1,120,429 and the net tonnes (freight only) were 555,122.

We trust the above is useful, any further queries, please get in touch.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of this response by the Ombudsman, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on the Ombudsman's website: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dave Allard', written in a cursive style.

Dave Allard
Senior Government Relations Advisor, KiwiRail