

Submission on Canterbury RLTP 2024 – Tim Frank

The RLTP has the right language, but does not fully back this up with action and allocation of funds. More needs to be done to shift transport away from single occupancy motor vehicles to public transport and active transport. Freight needs to be shifted to rail and sea, where possible. It is not sufficient to just talk about it; significant changes will have to be made.

Public transport investment

Even to encourage a small change in transport patterns, the current improvements signalled for connected public transport and active transport are not sufficient. More money needs to be allocated to this area. In particular, in Christchurch, a route by route survey of major bus lines has to be done to ascertain where buses are held up and where journey time reliability suffers. As a result, solutions need to be found to increase journey time reliability for buses, even at the expense of delay to general traffic, and certainly if only a few car parks may be removed.

Truly regional public transport

Ecan has to finally take its role for public transport throughout Canterbury seriously and provide public transport connections for example between Christchurch and South Canterbury, between Christchurch and North Canterbury, and between Christchurch and Arthur's Pass. Preferably, many of these public transport links should be operated by rail, which is more attractive to passengers. These are core public transport services for a region.

Rail expenditure

Currently, no rail expenditure is included in the RLTP. Several important rail projects need to be initiated soon:

- repositioning the line between Timaru and Normanby. Several houses have been built in Scarborough, which make a repositioning more difficult. The corridor has to be protected as soon as possible and planning of a new line initiated.
- Restoring the double track sections between Rolleston and Islington, and between Addington and Woolston (where two tracks exist, but one is lower quality and hardly used). This should allow rail to carry more freight and would facilitate passenger trains running alongside freight.
- Widening the rail corridor along the Main North Line from Addington to Rangiora (where required), allowing future double tracking.
- Protecting the land near Blenheim Road and Detroit Place in Christchurch for rail purposes.
- Protecting rail corridors in Canterbury from encroachment.

Government Policy Statement

There is a possibility that a new Government Policy Statement on Land Transport will be issued, which might significantly change priorities towards a car-centric approach. Such an approach would be contrary to the evidence for sustainable and liveable region. Therefore, the RLTP needs to keep its focus on achieving a shift towards more sustainable and healthy transport modes. It needs to back this up with investment in these areas. A reactionary GPS should not derail efforts to look after Canterbury's people and natural environment.