

RAIL NETWORK ACTIVITY CLASS OVERVIEW

This document provides information about the Rail Network activity class in the Government Policy Statement on land transport (GPS) 2021.

BACKGROUND

The Land Transport Management Act (LTMA) has been amended to provide for the partial integration of heavy rail infrastructure owned by KiwiRail into the planning and funding framework for the land transport system.

The strategic direction for the rail network is set in the New Zealand Rail Plan (Rail Plan – yet to be released) with KiwiRail required to develop a Rail Network Investment Programme (RNIP) every three years setting out what activities it intends to deliver, and the amount of funding requested from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF). The RNIP will be delivered over a three-year period, alongside the 2021-24 National Land Transport Programme (NLTP).

The first RNIP is being developed to align with the GPS 2021 and the New Zealand Rail Plan. The RNIP and associated NLTF contribution will be approved by the Minister of Transport. The LTMA requires Waka Kotahi to assist KiwiRail to prepare the RNIP, to advise the Minister on the RNIP and the requested NLTF contribution, and to monitor the outcomes of the investment.

The Rail Network activity class is intended to support investment in KiwiRail's network maintenance and renewal programme outside the metro regions, and only KiwiRail can access the Rail Network activity class.

WHAT HAS CHANGED

Inclusion of Rail in Regional Land Transport Plans

Waka Kotahi is working closely with KiwiRail, the Ministry of Transport, Auckland Transport and Greater Wellington regional council to understand what level of investment will be required from the Public Transport Infrastructure activity class to support the Wellington and Auckland metropolitan rail networks, which will inform advice to the Minister.

The RNIP will include KiwiRail's plans for maintenance and renewal activities needed to support a resilient and reliable national network. It will also focus on delivering the metro rail projects in Auckland and Wellington that have already been approved through the Transitional Rail activity class in the current GPS 2018. The Transitional Rail Activity class in the 2018-21 NLTP will cease at 30 June 2021.

The RNIP will identify funding requested from the new Rail Network and Public Transport Infrastructure activity classes in GPS 2021, as well as additional Crown funding.

Only Auckland and Wellington are required to reflect the RNIP in their RLTPs, and they are working directly with KiwiRail to develop those. While there is no requirement for other regions to reflect the RNIP in their RLTP, we would encourage other regions to continue to recognise the role of rail in their regions.

Rail continues to have a role to play in regions for the movement of freight and the provision of an alternative transport mode. Safety improvements through level crossing upgrades will continue to be a key matter that councils and KiwiRail need to work together to address.

The funding arrangements including local share contribution for rail crossing safety improvements remain the same as for the 2018-21 NLTP, and we would encourage councils to make the appropriate provision within their programmes.