

Comments on a Substantive Application under section 53 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024: Regional Transport and Public Transport

Fast-track project name	Mt Welcome, Pukerua Bay, Porirua
Fast-track application number	FTAA-2603-1181
GW file number	FTA260348

Comments from	Regional Transport and Metlink Strategy & Investment and Network & Customer teams
Date	22 June 2026
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Comments

Statutory documents considered when preparing these comments

1. In preparing these comments, we have considered the relevant transport related objectives and policies in the Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2025-35 (RLTP), the Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP), and the Regional Policy Statement. The relevant objectives and policies are outlined below.
 - a) The Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) sets the direction for the Wellington Region's transport network for the next 10–30 years. Objective 2 states that “Transport and land use are integrated to support compact urban form, liveable places, and a strong regional economy”.
 - b) The RPTP guides the design and delivery of public transport services, information and infrastructure in the Wellington region. Of particular relevance is the strategic focus area of “promoting more efficient land use and urban development that maximises access to public transport services and minimises the costs of delivering them”.
 - c) The RPTP's Network Design Principles are also an important consideration, and are further referenced in our comments below in relation to appropriate density and land use characteristics.
 - d) In addition, we have considered the proposed development in terms of its alignment with the following Regional Policy Statement policies (all requiring consideration when deciding on resource consent matters):

- (i) Policy CC.9: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with subdivision, use or development.
- (ii) Policy 55: Managing greenfield development to contribute to well-functioning urban areas and rural areas.
- (iii) Policy 57: Integrating land use and transportation.
- (iv) Policy UD.5: Contributing to well-functioning urban areas.

Key issues

2. **Location of development likely to result in high private vehicle use.** The location of the proposed development is likely to result in a high level of private vehicle dependency for its residents – with associated impacts on the state highway network, park-and-ride facilities as well as wider impacts in terms of health, safety, emissions and affordability. This is inconsistent with Objective 2 of the Regional Land Transport Plan, which envisages that “Transport and land use are integrated to support compact urban form, liveable places, and a strong regional economy”. These negative impacts may to some extent be able to be mitigated by future-proofing the provision of future public transport links (see below) and the development of a commercial centre to serve some of the residents’ needs. From a regional transport perspective, this proposed development also does not align well with the Regional Policy Statement policies noted above.
3. **Limited active transport connectivity to existing amenities.** Connectivity between the proposed development and local destinations (train stations, shops, jobs, schools) for people walking, biking or using micromobility is very limited. There are some key opportunities to improve this and provide more travel choice for residents.
4. **Safe pedestrian/cyclist SH59 crossing critical.** To provide travel choice, and reduce car dependency, it is critical to provide for a safe pedestrian/cyclist crossing of SH59 connecting to the existing Ara Harakeke Pathway. This would enable active mode trips from the proposed development to Pukerua Bay rail station and shops to the north and other amenity centres and hubs to the south. This is especially important because more direct access to the Pukerua Bay Railway Station and shops appears to be dependent on the adjacent Muri Block development to the north being progressed, the timeline for which is unclear at this point. Safe connection could be provided for by an at-grade signalised crossing and reduced speed limits through this section of road.
5. **Bus service unlikely to be viable.** Providing a public bus service for the proposed development in isolation is unlikely to be viable. On the one hand, any such service would be likely to incur high operating costs due to relatively long distances to destinations, while on the other, it would struggle to achieve a viable level of cost recovery, due to the small residential population. This does not align with central government direction to Public Transport Authorities, through the

Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34, to deliver greater farebox recovery and third-party revenue.

6. **Site should be future-proofed to enable future bus service.** Nevertheless, Greater Wellington strongly supports future-proofing the site with north-south connecting roads linking to adjoining sites to the north and, eventually, to the rest of the Northern Growth Area. This would help to optimise the viability of a bus route in the future. This development alone is unlikely to meet the Regional Public Transport Plan threshold of 2,700 residents for a new bus service.¹ However collectively, developments in the Northern Growth Area could meet this threshold. Even where such a population threshold is met, a viable bus service would be dependent on a north-south connector road suitable for buses and consideration of infrastructure requirements.
7. **Limited capacity for bus servicing Pukerua Bay station.** Additionally, any future bus service connections to Pukerua Bay and Plimmerton Bay stations will require space for buses to stop and turn. This is theoretically feasible at Plimmerton Station where on-street parking could be removed to make way for a bus-stop. However, at Pukerua Bay Station there is no space for bus stopping, parking or turning. Land would need to be acquired through a land acquisition process, which would be costly and prolonged.
8. **Impact on park-and-ride facilities already at capacity.** Park and ride facilities at Pukerua Bay and Plimmerton Railway Stations are already at or near capacity before 7:30 am on weekdays and opportunities to provide additional capacity through land purchase or space optimisation are highly constrained. At Pukerua Bay this would require the acquisition of private property, which would be a costly and prolonged process. The Plimmerton Station park and ride carpark is adjacent to the Taupo Swamp and flood-prone recreational land, which will make expansion challenging. This limited capacity to increase park-and-ride at these stations makes safe and easy active mode connections between the development site and Pukerua Bay railway station more critical. Without the ability to park and ride at their nearest rail station, residents may instead opt to travel further south on SH59 to access stations with park-and-ride capacity. No information or consideration is provided in the application about the likely impact on park and ride.
9. **Development design does not support internal connectivity.** The internally somewhat disconnected cul-de-sac layout does not support good connectivity by active transport modes, and is likely to result in longer vehicle trips. There is some provision for active modes via trails, but this could be improved further.

¹ This is a development anticipated to accommodate 900 residential allotments. The assumption in the Porirua HBA [Housing and Business Capacity Assessment Chapter 4 with Appendix](#) (extrapolated from tables on p.15) is that there are about 2.2 - 2.3 people per dwelling. This would mean a total of about 2070, which would not meet the threshold.

Key matters that the Panel should consider

10. **Need to future-proof for public transport.** It is crucial that this development does not preclude the potential provision of a public bus service in the Northern Growth Area once the necessary conditions (populations thresholds etc) are met. As noted above, this will require the provision of at least one connector road suitable for buses from the proposed site, connecting north through to Pukerua Bay and south through to Plimmerton. We note that the structure plan for the Northern Growth Area envisaged one north-south connector road capable of carrying buses.
11. **Safe pedestrian/cyclist access to existing Ara Harakeke Pathway.** Safe pedestrian/cyclist access to the existing Ara Harakeke Pathway must be provided for. This facility provides the only existing non-vehicle connection with shops and amenities, railway stations and beyond to employment and education. Safe connection could be most effectively provided through an at-grade signalised crossing, rather than the proposed roundabout on SH59. It also requires a lower speed limit to be applied to this section of SH1, which currently drops to 50km just to the north of the proposed roundabout. (Refer assessment of intersection types/options in the Integrated Transport Assessment - Table 7-1: SH59 intersection options.)
12. **Future-proofing active transport links with Pukerua Bay via Muri Block.** We understand that the block to the north of this site is being developed for residential housing. It will be important that the north-connecting road from the Mt Welcome block progresses as planned to ensure that residents are able to access the Pukerua Bay Station – particularly by active modes – without having to use the State Highway. This connectivity will bring safety, public health, emissions and productivity benefits (because there will be fewer residents using the State Highway).
13. **Provision for cycling on north-south connector road.** The proposed central north-south collector road has two different typologies for cycling provision – switching from marked cycleway to shared path (see Figure 8-4, page 42 of ITA). To support cycling, a consistent and high level of service for this core route should be established from the outset. In light of its planned future function as a connecting route to the rest of the Northern Growth Area, we consider this should be the highest Connector Road Type A/B level facility – i.e., on-road cycle lanes, shared path on one side and footpath on the other.