**Wellington Regional Rail Strategic Direction**

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| Rail has been a key component of the Wellington Region’s transport system for more than 150 years. The region has grown around the rail network, much of it as transit-oriented development, and Metlink’s rail operation has become an increasingly important way for people to move about, particularly to and from Wellington’s CBD.  Today’s network delivers over 2200 Metlink train services a week, most of them electric, providing a low carbon transport option to the 75% of the region’s residents that live north of the CBD, who make 14.3 million trips per annum and account for 41% of all peak trips from the north to the CBD. Patronage has grown strongly over the last decade – and grew by 6% in the 2018-19 year alone. The network is also used by 16 inter-regional passenger trains and around 100 freight trains week.  Recent spatial planning has identified rail as a key enabler of regional population growth over the next 30 years, 75% of which is expected to be in rail-served areas. Rail also has a key role in meeting a joint active modes and public transport regional journey to work mode share target of 45% (an increase of 40%), and an associated targeted reduction of transport generated carbon emissions of 30%.  The regional rail system has been the subject of significant investment in the last decade, primarily to address past underinvestment. Current projects will provide some short-term capacity through peak frequency improvements, but much more needs to be done to enable rail to meet our objectives of improved customer experience, mode shift, and ultimately, reduced emissions. Metlink’s new Regional Rail Plan responds to this challenge with a proposed 30-year programme of frequency, capacity, reliability, station and station access related improvements, which will address capacity, customer experience, and resilience related problems and ensure that rail can continue to fulfil its transport system role. |