



Submission by

The Employers and Manufacturers Association

to the

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

on the

Draft Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) 2024-2034

March 2024



About the Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA)

The EMA has a membership of more than 7500 businesses, from Taupō north, employing around 300,000 New Zealanders.

The EMA provides its members with employment relations advice from industry specialists, a training centre with more than 600 courses and a wide variety of conferences and events to help businesses grow.

The membership covers all industry sectors and all business sizes. The EMA has a duty to our members to keep them informed on what changes are being planned that will both positively and negatively alter the way they manage their business. We are actively encouraging our members to be more proactive in this space to enable them to mitigate the slow and unrelenting changes that are unfolding.

The EMA also advocates on behalf of its members to bring change in areas which can make a difference to the day-to-day operation of our members, such as RMA reform, infrastructure development, employment law, skills and education and export growth.

Contact

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Introduction and background

Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback on the Bay of Plenty Council's Draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2034.

Our mandate is to advocate on behalf of business. Our mission is to make local businesses more successful.

The EMA has over 800 member businesses in the wider Bay of Plenty region, as well as long-standing offices in Tauranga and Rotorua and we have a strong interest in seeing the region grow.

The Bay of Plenty has had historic under-investment in infrastructure including transport. To enable our businesses to continue growing, thriving, and supporting our communities we believe investment in infrastructure is crucial to unlocking potential in the Bay of Plenty and creating a vibrant and prosperous region.

There are some key objectives and projects that need to be focused on, barriers to enabling these that must be addressed, and the final Regional Land Transport Plan must align with the new Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024 to ensure the best chance for success.

Submission Questions

1. How much do you agree or disagree with the transport challenges this region is facing?

We agree with most of the challenges highlighted but think the focus needs to be on the congested and deteriorating transport infrastructure and the shortage of accessible, affordable housing.

Home to the largest port in New Zealand by total cargo volume, the Bay of Plenty is a key area for industry, and freight volumes are only forecast to grow. Transport infrastructure in the BOP needs to be able to keep up with this growth both for the prosperity of the region but also for those using the road alongside all the freight-related transport.

Transport infrastructure is also crucial to unlock housing in an already tight market. Lack of access to housing doesn't just impact on the ability to fill employment opportunities and generate productive output, but increases costs for existing citizens, reduces quality of life and ability for local businesses to attract workers with the skills they need.

Factors that are the cause of some of these challenges should also be addressed in the plan to drive change. These include factors like:

- How existing funding / financing systems can meet the needs of a fast-growing region, and what other systems or tools might be needed.
- Capability and capacity of local and central government to deliver projects within appropriate timeframes.
- What effect changes in national policy direction will have on local delivery and how continuity of key projects is maintained.



2. How much do you agree or disagree with the transport objectives?

We agree with most of the objectives identified, however, Economic Prosperity and Enabling Housing Supply should be the emphasis, which will support the Draft Government Policy Statement on land transport as well as the core challenges and needs of the region.

The headline targets seem overly ambitious and not fully aligned to the objectives. Additionally, the headline target for Economic Prosperity is focused on timeliness for freight movements during inter-peak hours, this should be across all hours not just peak/inter-peak times.

The causing factors of the main challenges mentioned earlier, are not addressed in the objectives, and without addressing these, you won't see meaningful change in the outcomes.

3. How much do you agree or disagree with the proposed list of priority projects?

We agree with the proposed list of priority projects and emphasise that those projects which enable housing and freight should be accelerated.

The SH29A package of works is crucial to the Bay of Plenty having benefits to freight, employment opportunities, land supply for housing and industry, safety for road users, and public transport opportunities. The importance of this project could be emphasised more in the RLTP.

The Connecting Mount Maunganui (both Local Roads and State Highways) project could also be highlighted more clearly in the RLTP. This project needs to be progressed with some urgency due to its impacts on the economic wellbeing of both the Bay of Plenty and New Zealand as well as on the liveability of Bay of Plenty locals trying to move around the area.

Other Feedback

The Draft RLTP should be reviewed and reissued to align more closely with the new government's policy direction, and in line with the new Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024. This will set the region up better for successful collaboration with central government on key projects that need action quickly.

The RLTP also should touch on or dig into some additional elements that should be considered:

- Tools and mechanisms to improve efficiencies within the transport system.
- Exploring current and new funding and financing tools that will be needed to keep up with the capital and speed required on some key projects, and which have been highlighted as possibilities with the new government:
 - o User pays models and tolling on new roads.
 - o Congestion/time of use charging.
 - o Enablement of overseas investment.



Conclusion

The EMA agrees with many of the challenges, objectives, and priorities in the Draft RLTP, however, without alignment with the forthcoming Government Policy Statement on land transport, it will be ineffective in the new political environment and risks Bay of Plenty transport issues being overlooked.

The Bay of Plenty has been undergoing, and will continue to experience, large amounts of growth in both industry and population, and while there is huge potential, the state of region's transport infrastructure will severely impact on businesses, communities and individuals if not addressed in a strategic and timely manner.

We would like to thank the Bay of Plenty Regional Council for the opportunity to submit on the Draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2034.