

**Media statement
For immediate release**

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KiwiRail releases Marsden Point rail designation documents

KiwiRail infrastructure manager ONTRACK confirmed today the Notice of Requirement served on Whangarei District Council for the designation of the Oakleigh to Marsden Point Rail link in December of last year, is now a public document.

ONTRACK Acting Chief Executive Thomas Davis says the Notice of Requirement and the application to Northland Regional Council for resource consents are part of the legal process involved in designating the route and protecting it for future rail use. The resource consents relate to works within the coastal marine area.

“Today we have taken the next step in the process,” he said. “This involves making the Notice of Requirement and application for resource consents public so that members of the public can read them and come back to us with any thoughts they have in the form of submissions.

“We have allowed six weeks or 30 working days for this process. At the end of that time, a hearing will be arranged to give people making submissions an opportunity to provide evidence and speak on the project.

“It’s another step forward in securing the route for a rail link between the North Auckland Line and the deep water port at Marsden Point,” said Mr Davis. “But it’s important to understand that designation does not mean building of the line will automatically follow.

“Funding for the construction work has yet to be allocated and a date set. But at least it is another step along the way.”

Last year, ONTRACK entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a joint venture with NRC to progress the issue. The MOU provided for costs of acquiring the land for the designation to be shared and ownership of the land required for the corridor to revert to ONTRACK.

Mr Davis paid tribute to the perseverance and determination of NRC in advocating for the line.

“Without the Council’s enthusiasm and energy, the project might never have reached this point,” he said. “The creation of a joint venture between ourselves and the Council has given it momentum.”

The rail link is a 20 kilometre section of line from the North Auckland Line at Oakleigh to the deep-water port at Marsden Point. The designation provides for a corridor wide enough to accommodate double-tracked lines for the entire length apart from the junction at Oakleigh and through Mata Hill where it’s desirable to minimize the width of the cutting.

The route was chosen after an initial evaluation of options between 2002 and 2003 and further refinement between 2006 and 2008

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