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Total Mobility Changes

This letter seeks your feedback on proposed changes to Total Mobility in our Region, which you may have seen some publicity about late last year.

The Regional Council, in choosing to provide funding for public transport, accepts responsibility for the needs of people whose disability prevents them from using bus and train services which are available to other members of the community – hence its involvement in Total Mobility.

However, demand for Total Mobility is continuing to increase sharply. The Regional Council's expenditure on Total Mobility has grown over the last 5 years as follows:

1994/95	\$530,000	
1995/96	\$694,000	31% increase
1996/97	\$795,000	15% increase
1997/98	\$792,000	no change
1998/99	\$937,000	18% increase
Over 5 years		77% increase

This expenditure on Total Mobility currently receives a 40% subsidy from Transfund New Zealand, the Government's road funding agency, but that subsidy is unlikely to continue. Recent approaches to various Government agencies (through the Ministry of Transport to the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Policy) on behalf of all regional councils have not resulted in any willingness by them to assist with funding for Total Mobility

The Regional Council is now intending to cap its Total Mobility expenditure at \$1,050,000 per year. This proposal is subject to the outcome of the Annual Plan and 10-year Long Term Financial Strategy process currently underway, which you will of course be entitled to make a submission on during April and May 2000

The re-imposition of the funding cap (notwithstanding that it is considerably higher than the previous one) will mean that the average funding per Total Mobility member will reduce over time, unless we put restrictions on which groups of people should have access to the scheme. For example, several regional councils in other parts of the country have now excluded resthome residents from Total Mobility, and we are proposing the same in Wellington, on the basis that resthomes can be expected to provide for the reasonable transport needs of their residents. Likewise, people whose use of Total Mobility is largely determined by their health status should have their transport needs catered for by the health system, rather than the regional council. The fact that this may not happen is unfortunately not a matter which the Regional Council believes it should continue to take responsibility for.

In summary, our proposals are likely to mean that the following groups of people will be increasingly excluded from the Total Mobility from July 2000 onwards:

- People living outside the area where regular public transport is provided for the general population
- People living in resthomes and hospitals (as opposed to retirement villages)
- People with intellectual disabilities
- People with psychiatric illnesses

The background to this proposal is explained in the enclosed reports to the Regional Council's Passenger Transport Committee.

This letter is being sent to all Total Mobility agencies, the Assembly of People with Disabilities, Transfund New Zealand and the Ministries of Transport, Education, Health and Social Policy, and to all Members of Parliament for Wellington Region electorates.

If you wish to comment on our proposals, please send your submission to us by Thursday 20 April (Easter Thursday) to:

Public Transport Department
Wellington Regional Council
142- 146 Wakefield Street
PO Box 11 646
WELLINGTON

Fax 802 0352
E-mail total.mobility@wrc.govt.nz

Yours sincerely

ANTHONY CROSS
Manager, Public Transport