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Report to the Passenger Transport Committee
From Anthony Cross, Manager Public Transport

Public Transport Update

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on recent developments and work in progress in the Public Transport Department.

2. Kapiti Coast

Kapiti to Kenepuru and Wellington Hospitals bus service

This Tuesdays and Thursdays only service was introduced on 6 August. A slightly amended timetable was introduced on 6 November to coincide with printing of a separate leaflet which has now been distributed to all Kapiti households via the Kapiti Observer.

A poster has also been prepared to publicise the service in medical centres, etc.

While it is too soon to judge the success of the trial, the numbers using the service are not encouraging. The success of this service is very dependent on Capital and Coast District Health Board's ability to provide Kapiti people with specialist appointments to fit in with the bus timetable, and to promote the service through its own channels.

Otaki Bus Service

The Otaki to Paraparaumu commuter bus service has been postponed indefinitely.

As a result of the tendering round a contract was awarded. However, we subsequently became aware that the successful tenderer was subject to a review by the Land Transport Safety Authority. Until that issue is resolved the service is unable to commence.

Ministry of Education School Buses

There will be changes to school bus services in Waikanae and Paraparaumu from the beginning of the next school year.

The Ministry of Education's contracts with Mana Coach Services for "free" school buses will finish at the end of the current school year.

The Ministry has decided not to re-tender those services, in keeping with its long-standing policy of not providing such services where there is "suitable public transport". It appears that the Ministry regards a suitable public transport service as one which makes it possible for students to travel to and from school by a reasonable (but not necessarily direct) route in a reasonable time frame. Therefore Waikanae students attending Paraparaumu College, their nearest secondary school, would be obliged to travel through, and change buses at, Paraparaumu Station. The capacity of the public transport service, as opposed to the route and timetable, does not seem to be taken into account.

The Waikanae "free" school buses are the last to operate in any urban area in this Region. Similar services in Eastbourne, Stokes Valley and Upper Hutt were discontinued at the end of 1996, and were replaced by a mixture of commercial and Regional Council-contracted fare-paying school buses. Parents in those areas were equally upset about the loss of "free" school buses for their children. The Kapiti Coast services were proposed for stopping at about the same time, but fortunately for Kapiti parents the Ministry decided to continue them for a further tender round.

In response to the end of the current contracts, Mana Coach Services notified the Council that it would continue to operate the existing Waikanae school buses next year, on a fare-paying basis. The legislation requires us to register services within 21 days of notification, unless we decline to do so in limited circumstances which did not apply in this case. The law does not provide for us to de-register a service - only the registering party may do that.

Mana has registered the services to operate at the prevailing child fares (ie, exactly the same fares as would apply if the service was operated under contract to the Council). The Kapiti Coast fares, particularly on the Waikanae route, are extremely low per kilometre by comparison with fares elsewhere in the Region. In Wellington City, for instance, parents pay \$60.00 per month for a bus pass for children who generally travel much shorter distances to school.

3. Porirua

A new bus turnaround facility was recently built by the Porirua City Council to enable buses to serve the relatively new housing area at the top of the Pikarere Street, Titahi Bay. As a result, Titahi Bay Route 2 was changed to include this area, with effect from 8 October 2001.

4. Wellington

A major revision of Stagecoach Wellington timetables, affecting peak, evening and weekend services, came into effect on Sunday 25 November 2001.

These services are all kick-start services.

The summary of timetable changes which was distributed to passengers is attached (**attachment 1**).

5. Hutt Valley

Stagecoach Flyer

A new contract for the Stagecoach Flyer service includes some earlier morning trips seven days a week, in response to requests for earlier services to the Airport. The new timetable came into effect on Monday 26 November 2001.

Gracefield (Route 76)

Route 76 links Lower Hutt Queensgate, Waterloo Interchange, Gracefield, Seaview and Petone every 30 minutes between 6.00am and 6.00pm.

The current timetable will operate for the last time on Monday 24 December 2001.

The patronage on the route has never developed sufficiently to justify the all-day service. Accordingly, from Monday 7 January 2002, the service will be reduced to cater only for morning peak journeys from Waterloo to Gracefield and Seaview, and afternoon peak journeys in the other direction.

Existing passengers of the trips to be discontinued will be notified shortly so that alternative arrangements can be considered in cases of serious inconvenience.

All other Hutt Valley bus service issues have been deferred until we have undertaken a community consultation in the first half of 2002.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

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Attachment 1: Summary of timetable changes