



caring about you & your environment

Report 02.508

21 August 2002

File: E/6/19/3

[02.508_djw]

Report to the Passenger Transport Committee
From Dr D J Watson, Division Manager Transport

Other Matters of Interest – August 2002

1. Purpose

To bring to the attention of the Committee other matters of interest not mentioned elsewhere on the order paper.

2. Financial Position

The final end of year result for 2001/02 shows the Division had an operating surplus of \$392,000 out of a total budget expenditure of just over \$49 million. **Attachment 1** gives a more detailed breakdown of the end of year result.

3. Tranz Rail Issues

3.1 CPP

The Transfund New Zealand Board invited Mr Stone to attend their meeting on 18 July 2002 to discuss the Council's request for approval of a Brook's Law CPP for urban rail. As a result of that meeting, officers from both organisations have been working on yet another CPP application. It is clear that the Board and the Council have the same overall objectives:

- a whole of government best solution
- a long term sustainable urban rail service

A meeting is being arranged for Cr Shields with Michael Gross, the Transfund Chairman, to discuss some of the issues surrounding the CPP process for urban rail. After this meeting a further application for an urban rail CPP will be presented to the September 2002 Transfund Board meeting for approval.

3.2 **English Electric refurbishment**

After a meeting with Tranz Metro staff on 9 August 2002 it was agreed that a detailed specification for refurbishing the EE cars be drafted and then tenders called for the work. The Alstom Woburn workshops are already fully committed up to Christmas with other work.

3.3 **Current contract**

Tranz Metro have stated again that it is not seeking any additional contract payments for the Paraparamu rail service improvements implemented in August 2001 or the extra Masterton peak train service which will now start in October 2002. We are looking at ways to increase the number of carriages on the Masterton line to provide more capacity. In the meantime Tranz Metro will charge a minimum fare from Wellington to discourage local users taking the Wairarapa services in the evening peak.

4. **Financing Public Transport Infrastructure Through Increasing Land Values**

Several members of the Council and staff attended an MOT sponsored presentation by Prof George Hazel. Prof Hazel visited Council offices about two years ago when he was just moving from a position as principal Transport Adviser to Edinburgh City to run his own business looking at developing an existing freight rail line around Edinburgh into a passenger line with funding derived from gains in land and development values resulting from it. Clearly from his presentation on 30 July 2002 he had managed to make some gains with his approach and not only in Scotland.

In the UK, as elsewhere, public funds for transport infrastructure projects are not keeping pace with demand. New approaches to funding involving the private sector are being sought. In roading the solutions have focussed on charging for road use either directly with a toll or indirectly using the concept of shadow tolls. Private road ownership, public/private partnerships and so on have all emerged as methods. Funding of public transport infrastructure using these methods has, until now, been more problematic. The approach being promoted by Prof Hazel has clearly got promise in some applications. The one clear prerequisite being that there has to be an uplift in land or development value generated by the project.

New projects will have a greater likelihood of being funded in this way than improvements to existing facilities. A possible future example in Wellington would be the provision of a light rail service between the Wellington station and the Airport or between Melling station and Waterloo station.

Prof Hazel's approach is a more direct capture of increased value than the current crude transport rating system. Of course transport rating could be, in theory at least, be refined to better capture land value betterment resulting from infrastructure investment.

5. **Marketing/Communication Progress**

Communications and Transport Division staff have begun work on defining a research and project plan to underpin future transport marketing activities. The

research will build on the existing qualitative NFO research being done as part of the bus route reviews.

Cooperation with the Auckland Regional Council and Environment Canterbury transport marketing officers was initiated. This resulted in a meeting in mid-August held in Wellington where the three councils agreed to share research results and examples of marketing tools and projects, and work together on issues of joint concern.

6. Access to Buses for People with a Disability

A few years ago a complaint was laid against Stagecoach (Wgtn) under the Human Rights Act by a group of four people with disabilities on the basis that Stagecoach (Wgtn) was not providing appropriate access to their buses. The Act required access to be provided to public facilities with the only proviso being the level of cost not being prohibitive. This action ended with Stagecoach (Wgtn) demonstrating that its bus purchasing programme would over time ensure all buses had adequate access for people with disabilities and in particular for those in wheelchairs. Stagecoach contend that they are equipping their new buses in accordance with the standards set in the UK for access to public service vehicles.

Though the Council was not a party to the complaint it was involved in a number of ways. Officers were interviewed by the Human Rights Office and myself in particular was involved in a number of meetings on the subject with Stagecoach and officers of the Human Rights Office.

Recently a regular wheelchair user of Stagecoach (Wgtn) services has raised concerns over the access to buses. The concerns are two fold. First they have had problems with the operation of the wheelchair ramp and on some occasions the attitude of the operator. It is clear that the ramp on wheelchair accessible buses is a problem. The ramp is deployed on a very irregular basis. This leads to it causing problems when it is required. Stagecoach have been asked to respond to this problem. In our view this is a maintenance issue. To avoid the ramp seizing up it should be deployed regularly regardless of need. The second issue being raised, and not for the first time, is that the access to the bus is via the rear door not the front door. This causes problems for the driver and the user.

Stagecoach have provided an interim response to the effect that they are investigating the matters raised and will provide a full response when their investigations are completed.

7. Let the Bus Go First

In New Zealand, the road user rules are contained in the Traffic Regulations. Under these rules, a bus waiting to re-join a traffic stream is given no more priority than any other vehicle.

Where traffic is slow moving, drivers of other vehicles will often allow a bus to join the traffic stream, though there is no legal requirement for them to do so. Buses often experience greater problems (and delays) joining the traffic stream where traffic is busy but faster moving; other drivers are more reluctant to let a bus in as they may perceive that they are likely to be delayed as a result.

Matters relating to the allocation of priority on public roads are not an issue for a local authority bylaw. Any change would be required to be made on a national level, to ensure consistency across New Zealand.

The LTSA has advised that any such change could only be introduced by changing the Traffic Regulations, which apply nationally. The LTSA is currently involved in a process whereby the road user rules contained in the Traffic Regulations are being transferred to a Land Transport Rule. This is a process involving consultation with the relevant industry and public stakeholders. The first “round” of consultation has already taken place and the next step in the process will be the production of a “yellow” draft which is expected to be circulated for public consultation late in 2002. Any changes to the road rules resulting from this process are expected to be implemented mid-late 2003.

An opportunity therefore exists now for the Council to seek a change in the road rules. This would require a submission by the Council to LTSA, in response to the “yellow” draft document. This submission would need to describe the desired change and give supporting justification. The submission along with all of the others received, would then be put forward for public consultation. LTSA would then consider all of the submissions received before making a decision on the proposal; the principal criterion for LTSA being “safety at reasonable cost”. The recommendations of LTSA would then be embodied in a legislative change which, subject to parliamentary approval, would then become law.

The current process is a “one-off” for the transfer of the road user rules into a Land Transport Rule. However, LTSA anticipate that opportunities to change the Land Transport Rules will then occur on an annual cycle.

A proposal to give buses priority over other road traffic would be unlikely to be supported by the LTSA, unless it could be demonstrated that such a measure would not create the potential for accidents to occur. In practice, it is unlikely that evidence could be assembled which would overcome the concerns of the LTSA in this respect.

A more successful and cost effective approach would be a publicity campaign to encourage the drivers of other vehicles to give way to buses, supported by the progressive introduction of bus lanes, and footpath widening where appropriate.

8. Infrastructure Improvements

8.1 Tawa Commuter Carpark

Work has been completed in Duncan Street providing 38 new spaces. On the western side of the line a new footbridge extending northwards has been added to the existing footbridge structure to improve access to the 30 spaces recently marked out there.

8.2 Ngaio Commuter Carpark

A northern extension to the existing carpark has been prepared and will be sealed as soon as weather permits. It will provide an additional 22 spaces.

8.3 **Johnsonville Commuter Parking**

Work is well underway in Moorefield Road creating approximately 35 new spaces on the land between the road and the rail fence. On the eastern side of the line in the existing commuter parking area, work has been completed creating an additional 18 spaces. There are now no more obvious options available for future expansion at Johnsonville.

9. **Double Deck Trolley Bus**

The LTSA have announced that it will not give the Hong Kong (Stagecoach) based double deck trolley bus a height exemption to operation in Wellington for six months. It appears that the height of the bus exceeds the LTSA rules for dimensions of vehicles on New Zealand roads. This is very disappointing as the vehicle would have attracted much interest.

10. **Carriage of Bicycles on Trains**

A Cycle Aware spokesperson made a submission at the last Committee meeting on carriage of bicycles on trains.

There are a number of issues associated with improving accessibility for bicycles on public transport. There is limited baggage capacity on the present EMUs and there would be a significant cost involved in extending this area. An alternative would be to allocate some of the present seating area to bicycles, however, given the overall lack of capacity in the system this would not be wise at this time. Even using the present baggage areas there is an issue with security of the bicycles. Some of these are valued up to \$4,000 and the owners are reluctant to leave them unsupervised. With the limited baggage space available, cyclists cannot be assured of getting on their desired train.

We have a total of 72 locker spaces for bicycles with demand for more but these are only available on a medium term basis (6 months). We do not have any facilities for occasional bicycle storage.

With our present constraints on capacity any move to remove or reduce the present charge would increase a demand that we were having difficulty meeting at present. If it is desired any new contract for rail services could provide for free carriage of bicycles. Any new rolling stock purchased could be constructed with accommodation for any nominated number of bikes.

We will over time increase the number of lockers and this could be accelerated with an additional budget provision.

My recommendation would be steady as she goes, increase the number of lockers, make additional room available in any future purchases, when supply exceeds demand reconsider whether a charge is appropriate.

11. **Communications**

Many of the matters raised in this report are being communicated through operator publicity material or local community newspapers.

12. Recommendation

That the report be received.

DAVE WATSON
Divisional Manager, Transport

Attachments

1: Transport Division end of year financial report