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**Report 02.595**

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Report to the Passenger Transport Committee  
From Karen Richardson, Marketing and Communications Advisor

## **Research Based Public Transport Marketing - Update**

### **1. Purpose**

To provide an update on the development of a research based public transport marketing strategy.

### **2. Background**

In June 2002 the Passenger Transport Committee agreed the first phase of a research based marketing strategy based around the following (Report 02.326):

- (a) To attract new users and increase usage by existing users and, at the same time, advance the broader objective of the WRC in respect of sustainable development.
- (b) To undertake market research to understand barriers to using public transport in the region and identify the segments of the population where there is the greatest potential for growth.
- (c) To discuss public transport marketing issues with transport operators and officers of other regional councils.
- (d) To develop pilot programmes to test the potential of individualised marketing and other means of improving the provision of information about public transport services.
- (e) To monitor marketing programmes designed to increase public transport patronage to ascertain their effectiveness.

I was recruited on 9 September, on a six month contract, as a Marketing and Communications Advisor dedicated to the Transport Division.

I join the WRC from the UK where I was a Marketing Manager for a leading international law firm. Prior to that I was employed as a Marketing Manager for an international consultancy and as a Marketing Project Manager for The Royal Bank of Scotland, the largest bank in the UK.

I will be responsible for progressing the research based marketing strategy for public transport.

### **3. Update**

#### **3.1 Research**

A market research brief is being produced to enable a market research company to conduct fieldwork in November/December and report back in January 2003.

The research will explore the following (as specified in Report 02.326) for both users and non-users across the region:

- Market segmentation – looking at the demographic and psychological profile of users and non-users including their purposes of use.
- Perceptions about public transport compared with other modes of transport and the barriers to using public transport.
- Understanding the different motivators (for example, concerns about the environment and sustainability, cost of travel, comfort, reliability and safety) which effect the selection of public transport.
- Image and branding of services.
- Information requirements – in what form/frequency do people want information on services.
- Technological requirements – what improvements would make a difference to people using the service.

This research will provide us with a much clearer picture of the market. Following the research we will then be able to develop marketing programmes and communication tools targeted at different market segments.

Please note that this research is quite different from the bus review research. Here focus groups are being conducted for the specific purpose of reviewing bus services in key geographical locations around the region and, therefore, are much narrower in focus and are being completed over a longer time frame. However, the qualitative information gathered will feed into this wider research.

#### **3.2 Project planning**

The development of a project plan has begun that will schedule marketing priorities and activities for the rest of this financial year, and indicates the priorities for the next financial year.

The plan will combine long term projects (such as a review of the overall image and branding of public transport) with immediate projects (such as marketing support for the Hutt Valley Bus Review) to provide a road-map of work to achieve the goal of increasing the use of passenger transport in the region.

### 3.2.1 Short term projects

This will include, but is not limited to:

- providing marketing and communication support for the implementation of the Hutt Valley Bus Service Review. This will include developing a sub-brand and reviewing customer information requirements. This is also an opportunity to trial messages and tools developed in our market research on a new service.
- liaising with officers of other Regional Councils to learn from their experiences and working in partnership with the operators. As part of this process, I will be visiting Environment Canterbury on 25 September to discuss the lessons we can learn from the initiatives they have undertaken.
- developing a pilot work-based promotion in the region, which will be monitored to measure its effectiveness. This pilot will draw on the findings from the bus review research and research conducted by Auckland Regional Council into work-based public transport promotions. In February 2002 they ran a hospital roadshow, in conjunction with Auckland District Health Board, that was successful in changing behaviour by, firstly, encouraging trial and then continued use of public transport.
- looking at piloting different communication messages and promotional tools to communicate with key audiences and monitoring their effectiveness.

### 3.2.2 Long term projects

This will include, but is not limited to:

- reviewing the image and branding of public transport in the region; findings from the Hutt Valley Bus Service Review found that there is scope to improve the image of public transport.
- providing marketing and communication support for the Bus Service Reviews as these are rolled out across the region.
- developing a detailed marketing plan and activities schedule for 2003-4.

## **4. Communications**

Implementation of the marketing strategy will lead to a broad range of communication initiatives.

## **5. Recommendation**

*That this update be received.*

Report prepared by:

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