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Committee Passenger Transport
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Security at Commuter Carparks

1. Purpose

To report to the committee on the current situation regarding security at our commuter Park'n Ride sites and to investigate other ways to improve this security.

2. Background

At the PT Committee meeting in March the committee was informed of an increase in the number of incidents, mainly theft ex cars and unlawful takings (stealing cars), in our Waterloo, Melling and Petone carparks since last October. This followed a similar increase at Paremata and Porirua last year which had also been reported on. The committee then requested a more detailed report including possible ways of better securing cars left in our carparks during the day.

3. Comment

3.1 Recent Initiatives

As mentioned in previous reports we have responded to these incidents by improving our liaison with local police as well as setting up, as a three month trial, regular security patrols. In Lower Hutt, Harbour City Security patrolled Melling, Waterloo and Petone carparks during March, April and May. Armourguard are now doing the same for the next three months at Paremata, Porirua, Tawa, Redwood and Takapu Road. Incidents have shown a slight reduction over the time of the Lower Hutt trial, especially the figures for unlawful takings which reduced from 7 in February at Waterloo to one each in March and April.

The cost of these patrols averages out at around \$1,600 a month per carpark for these trials, and there will be a slightly lesser charge for a longer term contract. Commuter feedback has been very positive as carpark users have encountered the patrols from time to time and appreciate our efforts to curb these incidents. These costs can be covered by the current Infrastructure budget and are a cost effective, easily reviewed response to a constant problem.

3.2 Paremata Surveillance Cameras

During the first two weeks of March we had some further successes with our cameras at Paremata. Once in each week the same group of four individuals visited the carpark and broke into a succession of cars, stealing mostly stereos and personal possessions. They were captured on camera, as was their car, and good descriptions were passed to the police who were able to follow up on our information. Since then, incidents at Paremata have reduced and together with the upcoming patrols, we should see a long-term reduction in incidents here.

Also at Paremata we are trialing a new entrance camera for number plate recognition at night. The existing camera has not been able to read number plates between the glare of headlights. The new camera is supposed to correct this.

4. Commuter Carpark Security Program

With the help of our Security Consultant Frank Stoks, we have developed a draft document which forms a useful stock take of all our regions commuter carparks. Each of the carparks is described in terms of their size, distinguishing features, known crime history, current level of security provided, and suggested actions as applicable. The program also describes four levels of protection we could adopt for our carparks, from the lowest level where no specific security is needed through to extensive security arrangements involving modifications to landscaping and vehicle entries, security lighting, surveillance cameras and security guard patrols. These guidelines will be further developed and can gradually be implemented where necessary and as funding allows.

5. Further Security Options

5.1 Charging for Carparks

We have had an opinion from Philips Fox that we are entitled to charge for carpark spaces within our administered Park'n Ride sites should we so choose. There would be no liability on the council as long as standard signage was displayed advising that GWRC were not liable for any damage received while using the carpark. Obviously if we charged commuters we would want to offer them some security in return and the cost of any such measures could be offset by the charge.

5.2 Security Fencing

We have therefore conducted a feasibility study by way of an example on two carpark areas that would lend themselves to security treatment, one at the South East carpark at Waterloo Interchange and the other at the southern end of Paremata Station Park'n Ride.

At Waterloo we could fence off 130 spaces in the SE carpark at a capital cost of \$135,000. On-going yearly costs would be \$6,000. This would include a barrier arm and card access, security surveillance in the form of entry/exit and

general CCTV and security lighting. If we were to recoup this outlay over three years by charging users then the costs, based on 100% occupancy, would be around \$1.35 per day.

However there would be an extra cost to the users in obtaining the access cards of around \$10.00 once a year, and there would be a high expectation among card users of always being able to find a park in the secure facility whereas in reality that may not be able to be guaranteed.

If the barrier arm was replaced with a locked gate the initial savings would be around \$10,000 but there would be additional costs in locking off the area such as the cost of a security firm to lock and unlock the gate and having an emergency call-out system to unlock the gate at other times.

The same scenario at Paremata would provide 75 spaces at a capital cost of \$70,000 and on-going yearly costs of \$2,500. A daily charge of around \$1.20 would be needed here.

It is important to note that the vast majority of our Park 'n Ride sites would not lend themselves to this treatment because of bus access issues and pedestrian access.

6. Communications

Articles have appeared in both Lower Hutt and western community newspapers over the last 12 months about various incidents of theft and vandalism in our commuter carparks.

7. Recommendation

- 1. That this report be received for information.*
- 2. That as a first step we continue on with the security patrols for a 12 month period following our successful three month trial while closely monitoring their effectiveness.*
- 3. That as a second step we make provision in future budgets for security expenditure that would provide fencing and controlled access at selected sites for a higher level of security should this be required.*

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