



Report 05.648
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Committee Passenger Transport
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Access

1. Purpose

To look beyond the Human Rights Commission's report "The Accessible Journey", the result of its inquiry into accessible public land transport, and at the need to provide access for every aspect of life.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Comment

Over the last few years it has been pleasing to note that the Committee has itself started to raise issues that are best described as access issues. But first what do we mean by access in the context of the role of this Committee. Access is about being able to enjoy your particular lifestyle through the ability to reach the activities associated with that lifestyle. The public transport network provides one way that people can reach these activities.

On 1 January 2003 the Transport Division adopted a new role and purpose what was to articulate a vision for sustainable access in Greater Wellington.

- that is balanced, integrated, safe and responsive
- which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable
- that is supported by stakeholders and meets the needs of the community at reasonable cost
- which is compatible with overall government transport policy.

To implement the adopted sustainable access vision

- through active advocacy with stakeholders
- procurement of passenger transport services after consultation with communities, local authorities and service providers.

To market and communicate the adopted sustainable access vision

- through documents, presentations and other media
- by ensuring that the community has a positive perception of passenger transport and the role it plays in achieving a sustainable region
- and increasing patronage through providing information and promoting passenger transport.

In delivering the role and purpose the Division directly contributes to six of GWRC's "Quality for Life" elements.

3.1 Air

Air quality is maintained through the purchase of public passenger transport services, in particular electric urban rail services and the Wellington trolley bus services.

3.2 Energy

Public passenger transport services, the promotion of walking and cycling and a range of traffic demand management programmes contribute to the efficient use of energy.

3.3 Land

Sustainable access policies will promote sustainable land use. Land development is directly linked to transport costs. Integrated land use and transport planning provides a platform for successful urban and industrial sustainable development.

3.4 Transport

All the activities of the Division contribute to this attribute from the strategic planning, through policy development and the delivery of projects. All focussed on achieving sustainable access.

3.5 Safety and hazards

Road safety is clearly an ongoing and the Division contributes to improving road safety through its Regional Road Safety Strategy. Improvements to passenger transport infrastructure including lighting and the redesign of unsafe underpasses and other facilities will also enhance user safety.

3.6 Community

The Division places an emphasis on its support for socially desirable passenger transport services as well as commuter services. Additionally the Total Mobility scheme targets those unable to use passenger transport whatever reason. The same scheme is also available in some cases for those communities deprived of a conventional service.

3.7 Comment

GWRC's transport role sits within the context of the New Zealand Transport Strategy. That national strategy has the following key objectives:

- assisting economic development
- assisting safety and personal security
- improving access and mobility
- protecting and providing public health
- ensuring environmental sustainability

The Land Transport Management Act requires GWRC to review its Regional Land Transport Strategy so that it takes into account government policy such as the NZTS

and the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy.

The RLTS also has to include a traffic demand management strategy, take into account the level of funding likely to be available and avoid adverse effects on the environment.

GWRC implements the public transport part of the RLTS. The RLTS is under review and will be adopted in 2006.

Around the same time the Committee adopted the phrase "community travel" as against "commuter travel" as an attempt to embody this new concept. The review and subsequent changes in the Hutt Valley bus services was an outcome of these changes. The success of that programme indicated that the concept was sound.

Over recent years we have experimented on a minor scale, with special localised services, such as shopper buses or direct links to health services. None of which have been very successful mainly because people just want their 'access' when they want it not when we are willing to provide it.

In the discussions leading up to the development of the Council's next Long Term Council Community Plan it was suggested that the Committee consider making a specific effort to improve 'connections' particularly to health services but to other activities as well. The resources necessary to achieve this are unlikely, at this stage, to survive the budgeting process. However the idea is clearly a principle part of the Committees role.

As 'access' issues remain across our region it is the Committees role to provide the means to address these issues, regardless of resources availability. To this end I am suggesting the Committee consider a limited, trial based, approach by investing in a set of access initiatives. For example this could take the form of a series of public transport services designed to provide access to shopping, recreational and health service centres for people that would otherwise, for what ever reason, not be able to access these facilities. Such services might need to be designed differently to conventional bus or rail services by having some of the following characteristics:

- Luggage space (similar to the Airport Flyer)
- Variable rating to respond to user needs
- Specialist drivers with training suitable for user requirements
- Variable return timetable again to suit user requirements

It is unlikely that the next LTCCP and annual plan will provide additional financial resources to enable this concept to flourish. However it appears worthwhile to explore the opportunities for these initiatives and because of resource constraints this would be a limited nature. Overtime, if the preliminary trails provide worthwhile, the Council could review its financial commitment to this programme in future years.

A first step is to identify 'access' options involving the provision of a form of public transport services. Ideas are welcome.

4. Communication

There is nothing to communicate at this stage.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Agree to the officers undertaking a preliminary review of 'access' options, involving the provision of innovative public transport services.*

Report prepared by:

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