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Committee Transport & Access
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Integration of Cycling and Public Transport

1. Purpose

To discuss options for improved integration of cycling and public transport.

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. Background

3.1 Greater Wellington policy on bikes and public transport

The integration of cycling and public transport is embedded in Greater Wellington policy. The Regional Land Transport Strategy 2006-2016 states:

“Cycling as part of a longer journey combined with passenger transport also needs to be recognised and adequately provided for within our region”.

Policy 1.12 of the Regional Passenger Transport Plan 2007-2016 states:

“Encourage better integration between [...] passenger transport and other transport modes, especially walking and cycling [...].”

The Regional Passenger Transport Operational Plan states that Greater Wellington will seek to:

- *“Improve integration between passenger transport and cycling commute modes.*
- *Increase the number of cycle lockers at rail stations and bus interchanges.*

- *Investigate and ensure adequate safe and secure storage for bicycles on trains.*
- *Investigate the introduction of free carriage for cycles on trains.*
- *Investigate the introduction of cycle racks onto buses to allow free cycles carriage.”*

The ability to use a bike as part of a public transport journey makes it an attractive complement to public transport. It also enlarges the catchment areas of stations and bus stops and it can potentially decrease the demand for expensive park-and-ride facilities at stations. And as not all trips are return trips, the carriage of bikes on public transport is often preferable to cycle storage at stations, because it offers more flexibility.

3.2 The current situation

Bikes can be carried on trains in the Wellington Region, room permitting. Bikes are not allowed in the passenger compartments, but are able to be carried in the (relatively small) luggage compartments. On-train staff utilise their discretion when it comes to prioritising luggage and determining what can be carried without compromising the operation of the train.

Bikes are not able to be carried on buses (the reasons for this are discussed in section 5.1 below).

The maximum number of bikes that can be carried on trains is approximately:

- In a two car Ganz Mavag – 3 bikes
- In a two car English Electric – 3 bikes
- In a Wairarapa SWG car – between 6 and 8 bikes. An extra luggage car (which can carry several bikes) can be added to the Wairarapa train with advance notice.

Thus the total maximum capacity for bike carriage on trains within the region is about 200 bikes on peak hour services.

Bikes are accepted on a first come, first served basis. There will be less room for bikes if other luggage is being transported.

The charge for a bike is an adult fare, with a maximum of \$4. Monthly pass holders can take their bike on the train for a surcharge of \$5 per month.

3.3 The issues

Feedback from cyclists who take their bike on trains, and from potential users, indicates demand for better integration between cycling and trains (curiously there is little feedback on the integration of cycling and buses).

But the Metlink system is not regarded as being cyclist friendly because:

- Carriage on trains is organized on a first come, first served basis, and therefore there is the risk of being left behind
- Trains are not specifically equipped to carry bikes, which can lead to damage and issues with Tranz Metro about liability for any damage
- Cyclists have to buy a ticket to be able to take a bike on the train, which can discourage potential users
- The current organisation of cycle lockers at stations is regarded as sub-optimal and inconsistent
- Bikes are not allowed at all on buses.

As part of the process of preparing this paper, GW undertook a survey (aimed at cyclists, and undertaken through the GW website) to try to get a better understanding of the issues.

982 people responded to the survey, with the following results:

- 54% said they had taken their bike on a train (most of who did so less than once a month, with 6% regularly taking their bikes). 46% said they had never taken their bike on a train
- 78% of those who had taken their bikes on a train had never been refused carriage for their bike, and 16% had been refused only once. Of those who had been refused carriage, 44% were refused at peak times
- 71% rated the Tranz Metro on-board staff service as good, very good or excellent; 30% rated it as poor or very poor
- When asked what would encourage them to take their bikes on trains more often, removal of the fee for the bike carriage was the main factor, followed by knowing that they would get a space, and having better storage facilities.

4. Bikes on trains

4.1 Matters to Consider

4.1.1 Operational handling

The current trains are not designed for carriage of bikes within passenger areas, and it is inappropriate because of:

- Safety: In case of unexpected braking or an accident bikes can be a hazard for passengers
- Customer satisfaction: Contact with a bike may result in passengers getting dirty or even having clothes damaged.

The luggage compartments however are not equipped to transport bikes - there are no bike racks or other provisions to prevent bikes from falling over or damaging other bikes or other goods in the compartments.

The current situation is unsatisfactory for both users and Tranz Metro staff. Because users have no certainty that their bikes will be transported, this can potentially lead to problems, especially during peak hours. If not allowed on the train, the cyclist has to make a quick decision as to whether to leave the bike at the station and run the risk that it is stolen or damaged, or wait for the next train (with again no guarantee that the bike will be carried). The same applies to recreational cyclists.

Tranz Metro staff can face anger from rejected cyclists, arguments regarding how many bikes can be carried, and accusations of damage to bikes during the trip etc.

It should also be noted that when train services are replaced by buses, bikes cannot be carried on the buses.

4.1.2 Demand

Little information is available on the actual number of bikes carried on trains. During a survey at Wellington station carried out by GW in May 2006, 27 people arrived at the station with bikes during the morning peak (compared to the 200 available spaces).

However the recent survey indicated that there is likely to be greater demand for cycle travel.

4.1.3 Dwell times and delays

Passengers are not allowed to load or unload bikes themselves - this has to be done by Tranz Metro staff. Tranz Metro indicates that loading and unloading bikes takes approximately 20 to 30 seconds per bike, which can lead to increased dwell times and potentially cause delays in services.

4.1.4 Financial

There is no information available how much revenue is currently collected from the carriage of bikes, but based on the 2006 survey revenue is likely to be very small (probably less than \$200 per week).

With the new trains however, where cycles will be carried inside the passenger compartments, bike carriage may be at the expense of fare paying passengers.

It is noted that other large items such as prams, buggies or other luggage are carried without charge.

4.2 What happens elsewhere

The rules for carriage of bikes on trains in other cities vary. In most cities in the world it is **not** permitted to take a bike on a train during peak hours (mainly

because of capacity related issues – and most modern commuter trains do not have separate luggage compartments). Bikes are usually allowed to be carried at off-peak times.

The pricing policy varies, from free transport (sometimes only at off-peak) to half an adult fare, day tickets or even year tickets.

The main focus for transport of bikes on trains seems to be the recreational cyclist rather than the commuter.

However the policies applied in many cities are a combination of on-train and off-train measures and reflects the way the public transport system is organised. In the Netherlands for example, a country which is very cycle friendly, bikes can't be taken on a train during peak hours (except folding bikes), but almost every station has excellent bike storage facilities, often guarded, and often with bike service/repair shops (where bikes can be left during the day for servicing).

Melbourne is an example of the importance of developing a balanced system. In 2004 bike transport in Melbourne was made free of charge. However subsequently train travellers were banned from taking bicycles during peak hours because the system struggled to cope with demand. But the ban led to protests and the policy was changed to re-allow bikes on peak-hour trains. But continuing capacity problems mean Melbourne encourages people to use the increasing number of cycle lockers provided at stations.

In Auckland, bikes are allowed on trains, but it is discouraged (through the various information brochures) during peak hours. The cost is \$1.

More information on cycle carriage on trains (and buses) elsewhere in the world is found in attachment 1.

4.3 Potential areas for improvements

Potential areas to improve the integration of cycling and trains include:

- **Certainty:** provide more certainty for the user that the bike will be transported
- **Equipment:** provide measures to improve safe and secure bike transport
- **Charging:** providing cheap or free bike transport on trains.

These are discussed further below.

4.3.1 Certainty

No public transport user is guaranteed being able to catch a certain service. This is especially so at peak times, and if cycle carriage is to remain available at peak times little can be done to improve this.

But what could be done to potentially improve certainty is a stronger commitment from Tranz Metro that at least 2 bikes per 2 car unit (on the Ganz Mavag and English Electric trains) and 6 bikes in a Wairarapa SWG car be carried (although this still has to be subject to available space).

Such an approach will not completely resolve the uncertainty for cyclists, but it will improve the chance of bike carriage. And it will make cyclists feel more welcome.

4.3.2 Equipment

When considering improving the safety and security of cycle carriage, a distinction has to be made between the current trains, and the new trains due for introduction from 2010.

With the existing trains the options for improvement are limited. As mentioned above, the passenger compartments are not an appropriate or safe place to transport bikes. And the luggage compartments are quite small, multi-purpose, and adapting them for bike carriage will be difficult.

The new trains will not have luggage compartments, but each 2-car unit will (according to preliminary designs) have a multifunctional area within the unit. This area will be available for people in wheelchairs, bikes, prams and big items. It is likely to include bike racks with a restraining system to prevent bikes from falling.

The multifunctional areas are likely to be able to accommodate up to either two people in wheelchairs, or two bikes, or two large prams, or a combination thereof. During peak hours the train configuration will often be 3 sets of 2-car units, which means capacity for up to 6 bikes, or 6 wheelchairs or 6 large prams. The multifunctional areas are likely to have seats which can be folded away to make space available

4.3.3 Charging

Cheaper or free transport of bikes on trains is another option that may assist to improve the integration of the two modes. The potential revenue loss is expected to be minimal, and it can be seen from the survey that charging discourages people from taking their bikes on trains.

4.4 Comment

The needs of cyclists who want to take their bikes on trains and buses have to be balanced against the needs of other users, both in terms of operational requirements (current trains) and those (including those with special needs, such as people in wheelchairs, parents with prams, and passengers carrying large items etc.) who might use the space occupied by cycles (for the new and current trains).

One bike needs about twice as much space as one passenger. With limited capacity, a balance will have to be made between the transport of bikes versus the option to accommodate passengers.

No public transport user has a guarantee of being carried on a specific service. If a bus or train is too crowded, passengers are left behind and have to take the next service. In this respect bike users must expect to be treated like any other passenger.

But some simple measures could be undertaken to improve integration, including:

- removing charging
- improving certainty that a bike will be carried
- improving storage areas.

4.5 Tranz Metro response

Discussions on a draft of this paper were held with Tranz Metro. Tranz Metro strongly opposes the removal of the charge to carry a bike, considering that such a move would:

- send a signal that bikes were more important than extra passengers
- remove a control mechanism for on-board staff which ensures they oversee the loading, storage and unloading of bikes
- be contrary to world-wide policy.

Tranz Metro suggest:

- a flat fee of \$2 per bike
- signage in each luggage area indicating a maximum of 2 bikes can be carried, that carriage is on a first-come, first served basis, and subject to available space
- signage be added to carriages explaining the cycle policy and cost
- any decisions on cycle carriage be trial only
- any decisions on carriage of bikes in the new trains be made during the design stage and not in 2010.

The ultimate decision regarding the principle of carriage of bikes on trains rests with Greater Wellington, although operational issues are the responsibility of Tranz Metro.

4.6 Conclusion

The issue of bike carriage on trains needs to be addressed on a short-term basis (addressing the current rolling stock) and a longer-term basis (addressing the new rolling stock that will arrive from 2010).

It is suggested the current policy (with some amendments) be continued at least until the new trains arrive. The amendments should include:

- Remove the carriage charge for bikes, perhaps on a trial basis initially, both at peak and off-peak times, with more active communication of the availability of bike carriage
- Ensure that cyclists understand the conditions that apply to the transport of bikes i.e. no guarantee of carriage, and the first come first served rule
- Monitor bike carriage (to be able to react quickly to a major increase in usage)
- In association with Tranz Metro, set a minimum/maximum number per compartment/carriage as a guideline of the carriage of bikes i.e. no more than the maximum can be carried, but so long as this number is not exceeded, then a bike must be carried
- Investigate in collaboration with Tranz Metro and (potential) users whether the new Wairarapa SWG cars can be equipped with measures to improve the transport of bikes (e.g. hooks in the roof, upright racks at the sides or other measures)
- Investigate using the Wairarapa AG van (which has more capacity) in summer and at other times likely to be popular with cyclists
- Review the situation in 2010.

And with regard to the new trains:

- Ensure suitable capacity for bikes and other large items is included in the design of the new trains.

5. Bikes on buses

5.1 Current situation

Currently bikes are not allowed to be carried on buses on the Metlink network. This is partly a consequence of Land Transport NZ not allowing bike racks on the **outside** of buses, and partly because the relatively confined space on buses means it is not suitable to carry bikes (other than folding bikes) **inside** the bus (the same issues as with trains apply to internal carriage of bikes on buses).

Environment Canterbury is currently trialling (in conjunction with Land Transport NZ) bike racks on the front of buses. Land Transport NZ has indicated that it wishes to evaluate the results of this trial before making a decision on approving bike racks anywhere else in New Zealand. The trial ends in May 2008 and results are expected soon afterwards.

It is suggested that bike carriage on buses be reviewed when the results of the Canterbury trial are available.

6. Bike storage at stations

6.1 Current situation

Currently Greater Wellington provides for cycle storage at stations. Currently there are 130 individual cycle lockers at 12 stations within the region, as well as a number of cycle stands.

Greater Wellington paid for the installation of the lockers and also pays for their ongoing maintenance, but does not provide for their administration. The administration is provided by a variety of organisations on behalf of Greater Wellington. There are no formal agreements between these bodies and Greater Wellington for the provision of these services, and varying terms and conditions are applied to the use of the lockers.

It is recommended, as areas for further investigation, that Greater Wellington develop an operational policy on cycle storage at rail and bus stations, with consistent conditions regarding administration, renting etc. throughout the whole region.

7. Communication

Any change in policy will need to be communicated to the public.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Agrees to adopt the following measures:***
 - a. *Remove the charge for bike transport on trains (at both peak and off-peak times) immediately on a trial basis.*
 - b. *More actively communicate the availability of free bike carriage (including producing a brochure informing cyclists of this).*
 - c. *Ensure through this communication that cyclists understand the conditions that apply for the transport of bikes on trains i.e. there is no guarantee of carriage, and carriage is on a “first come first served” basis.*
 - d. *Monitor bike carriage.*
 - e. *In association with Tranz Metro, set a minimum/maximum number of cycles able to be carried per compartment/carriage i.e. no more than the maximum can be carried, but so long as this number is not exceeded, then a bike must be carried (but subject always to available space).*

- f. *Investigate in collaboration with Tranz Metro and (potential) users whether the new Wairarapa SWG cars can be equipped with measures to improve the transport of bikes.*
 - g. *Investigate using the Wairarapa AG van in summer and at other times likely to be popular with cyclists.*
 - h. *Ensure suitable capacity for bikes and other large items is included in the design of the new trains.*
 - i. *Review the situation in 2010.*
4. ***Agrees that Greater Wellington develop an operational policy on cycle storage at rail and bus stations, with consistent region-wide conditions regarding administration, renting etc.***
5. ***Requests officers to make the appropriate amendments to the Passenger Transport Operational Plan.***

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