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Committee Sustainable Transport Committee  
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## Customer Experience Improvements – Wellington Interchange

### 1. Purpose

This report outlines progress in evaluating and improving the Wellington Interchange customer experience.

### 2. Background

Customer and GWRC officer feedback, combined with a presentation to the Committee in June pointed to a number of customer information and signage shortcomings in and around the Lambton (bus) Interchange and railway station.

In response, a thorough design review of the customer experience at the site was undertaken. This review has found that additional to customer information and signage improvements, further opportunities exist within the interchange area to improve accessibility to the Metlink network and to grow patronage.

The review has two streams of recommended improvements:

- Short-term customer information and wayfinding signage, targeted for completion by January 2017.
- Long-term improvements, as part of providing better integrated Metlink services and supporting the transition to the new Wellington's bus network, targeted for completion by June 2018.

### 3. Customer engagement and insights

As part of GWRC's commitment to being a more customer-centred organisation, the review was led by GWRC's Customer Experience Leader following a customer-led design process to develop the recommendations.

Key to this approach is direct engagement with customers to understand their needs and expectations of the interchange area. Engagement methods used included:

- **In-depth interchange ‘walk-through’ interviews with customers**, selected to represent specific user perspectives - including community public transport advocates, Gold Card users, users with a significant visual impairments and students who do not use public transport (c. 11 interviews)
- **Intercept interviews with passing travellers within the interchange area** to understand their current experience of the interchange (c. 20 interviews)
- **Intercept interviews with Wellington bus travellers at Lambton Quay, Kilbirnie and Newtown**, as part of a project to design how customers will identify and navigate new Wellington bus network in 2018 (c. 112 interviews).

### 3.1 Customer definition of the Wellington Interchange

The customers’ view of what the interchange is (where it starts and where it ends), is defined by where they enter, connect and leave on their (mostly) public transport journey.

Whether connecting between services within the interchange or not, most customers have an expectation of a single integrated public transport network. They see the railway station, its platforms, its amenities, its entrance, access to the stadium, the subway, the Lambton (bus) Interchange and intercity bus stops as part of a single integrated transport hub.

Many feel their expectations are currently not being met because of the inconsistent appearance and service experiences within the area.

Beyond being a commuter terminus and connection point for Wellington’s CBD, many customers see the interchange as a transport hub for the wider city and region that could be performing a greater role as a gateway for travellers.

### 3.2 Customer requirements of the Wellington Interchange

Three key areas of customer need and improvement have been identified in the review:

1. **All public transport travellers** need a seamless, intuitive and reliable connection between travel modes on their journey. *The interchange area provided this for most frequent travellers who travel a regular route (e.g. commuters), but became challenging for less frequent travellers, or frequent travellers requiring new routes.*
2. **Visitors, new travellers and irregular travellers** on public transport need visitor-centred information to help them get to important destinations and attractions – in the city and the region. *The lack of clear information about services was a challenge for most in this group, leading them to seek work-arounds such as asking other travellers.*

3. **Travellers with disabilities and impairments** need consistent, logically designed spaces and assisted service to undertake their journey. *Many basic accessibility needs are not being met throughout the interchange area.*

## 4. **Proposed improvements**

A description of the proposed improvements to the interchange area are set out below, with further detail set out in **Attachment 1**.

### 4.1 **Interchange design principles**

The interchange review has informed two sets of design principles, which will guide the improvements of the interchange area and all other interchanges across the network.

- **The Basics** – Principles that ensure an accessible service for all members of the public by providing:
  - An instantly recognisable Metlink facility
  - Easy to access information about Metlink services and the network so travellers can plan and make their connection with minimal effort
  - Consistent and logically designed access for travellers with disabilities and impairments
  - Sufficient shelter for travellers to plan and wait for their journey in safety and comfort.
- **Value-adds** – Principles that enable an adoptable and desirable service to grow patronage by providing:
  - A hub for regional public transport
  - A positive ‘gateway experience’ to encourage public transport adoption
  - A visitor experience that positions public transport as a useful and enjoyable way to plan for and travel to important destinations and attractions.

### 4.2 **Short-term fixes**

A number of high-priority, short-term improvements have been identified and targeted for completion by January 2017. These are fixes to customer information and wayfinding signage that can take place within existing budgets.

In summary, key areas of improvement are:

- Improved wayfinding signage from the railway station to and between bus stops A, B, C and D
- Improved visibility of bus stop C
- Provision of RTI signage inside the bus atrium (adjacent to Stops A and B), so customers can wait inside in comfort
- Repositioning of the RTI sign on Bus Stop A to face customers in the waiting area
- Maps of the interchange area placed throughout the interchange area to help customers better locate other services

- Increased cleaning schedule to provide a cleaner waiting environment.

#### 4.3 Medium to long-term improvements

The new Wellington bus network changes planned for 2018 is a good opportunity and milestone for implementing the remainder of improvements. With many of these recommendations having implications for property owners and operators, this timeframe will also allow sufficient time for consultation, refinement and implementation.

Many of these initiatives would be useful in assisting the smooth transition to the new Wellington bus network.

Key recommendations for improvement include:

- **An integrated Metlink regional transport hub** – provide a more consistent Metlink brand presence throughout the ‘Wellington Interchange’ area, with integrated information services that provide support for all Metlink modes of travel.
- **A public transport gateway for visitors to Wellington City and the Region** – to better direct customers to popular destinations and attractions (e.g. Wellington Hospital, Te Papa) by better promoting and providing information about how to reach these destinations, or plan a day visiting the city and region, using public transport.
- **Metlink ‘concierge’ assisted service** – extend the customer service provided in the railway station to the Metlink bus areas, with a roaming Metlink concierge who can assist travellers with directions to services, demonstrate and encourage use of online information services and assist travellers with disabilities.
- **Provide comfort for a regional journey** – provide additional seating in internal bus waiting areas, access to wifi and consider short-term storage areas for luggage.

### 5. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

#### 5.1 Engagement

Significant engagement has informed this phase of the review. Further engagement will occur and be planned for via the medium to long term components of the review.

### 6. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Notes that the short term fixes will be funded from existing operational budgets.*

4. *Notes that any decisions requiring substantial additional funding or stakeholder consultation will be reported back to the Committee.*

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**Attachment 1:** Wellington Interchange Customer Experience Review / Detailed Recommendations: 19 August 2016