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Committee Sustainable Transport Committee

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General Managers' report to the Sustainable Transport Committee meeting 8 August 2017

1. Introduction

This report provides information on key programmes of work. It is supplemented by other reporting including:

- Information provided directly to councillors using the Councillor Bulletin, including updates on topical issues;
- The Quarterly Performance Report, which provides performance highlights, summary financial information, health and safety indicators, public transport patronage trends, major project progress, and key organisational metrics.
- The Annual Monitoring Report on the implementation of the Regional Land Transport Plan. This is reported formally to the RTC but is also provided to STC; and
- GWRC's Annual Report.

The format of this report has been revised to reduce duplication with these other reporting mechanisms and to provide clearer linkages between projects, programmes and the strategic framework.

2. Purpose

To inform the Committee of Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) activities relating to the Committee's areas of responsibility.

3. Strategic Framework

3.1 Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP)

The mid-term review of the RLTP is well underway. This involves checking that the strategic direction is still fit for purpose, and updating the projects and activities in the second three years of the programme.

Phase 1 of the review is complete and Phases 2 and 3 are underway. Phase 2 involves checking the current strategic context affecting the region's transport network for any significant changes over the past two years that would indicate a need to change the RLTP strategic direction. Phase 3 involves checking the progress made so far, primarily through project implementation, towards the strategic objectives in the RLTP.

Workshops will be held in August with the regional officers' Transport Advisory Group and the Regional Transport Committee will focus on these phases of the review.

The mid-term review must be complete by the end of April 2018 to feed into the next National Land Transport Programme 2018-21.

3.2 Regional Public Transport Plan (PT Plan)

The PT Plan sets out the vision, policies and actions for Wellington's public transport system. Apart from minor variations in response to specific issues, the PT Plan has remained largely unchanged since it was endorsed by Council in 2014.

The current focus of activity in public transport is on implementation of the major initiatives in section 4 of the PT Plan, in particular:

- Preparation for the Wellington City bus network changes and introduction of the new bus operating model and fleet
- Public transport fares review
- Developing the implementation approach for integrated ticketing
- On-going improvements to rail services and infrastructure.

A comprehensive review of the PT Plan will likely be required from 2018/19, once these initiatives have been progressed. A paper setting out timing and overall approach to a comprehensive review of the PT Plan will be brought to Committee later in the year – this will need to consider:

- Fundamental changes to fares policy that comes out of the Fares Review, including whether a change is required to farebox recovery policy or our overall approach to concessions
- Timing and linkages to the review of the Regional Land Transport Plan, including the statutory requirement to undertake a review of the PT Plan following endorsement of the Regional Land Transport Plan
- Further changes required as a result of the PTOM bus contracts, including possible changes to fleet

- Emerging policy and practice on customer experience
- Progress and timeframes for integrated ticketing via the National Ticketing Programme
- Potential changes to the network or programme of works as a result of the ‘Let’s Get Wellington Moving’ project
- Updates to the Regional Rail Plan (which is effectively a technical report that provides input to the PT Plan and for which a review has just commenced)
- NZTA guidance and policy, including national farebox recovery policy and related changes to SuperGold funding.

4. Key initiatives and projects

4.1 Let’s Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) / Ngauranga to Airport (N2A)

Work continues towards developing a short list of scenarios for public consultation later this year. The project includes modelling of potential interventions and packages. A number of reports are being prepared including a data report, a case for change report, and an options report. Ongoing conversations with stakeholders and interest groups continue to inform the work of the LGWM project team. Work is underway by the consultants appointed to look at mass transit routes through Wellington, including light rail. This has involved a number of meetings and workshops with key groups.

4.2 Sustainable Transport

A region-wide media campaign is underway to promote the benefits of using the Smart Travel app. Local radio, Neighbourly, Facebook and Metservice ads will run from 24 July – 25 August. An “activation” event for staff and students at Victoria University of Wellington was held to promote the app and its benefits as well as engage with students and staff about their travel patterns.

The Project Glow Wear Runway Shows will be held in Wellington on 12 August and in Auckland on 26 August. An on-line visibility survey to determine attitudes about being visible at night received over 750 completed surveys. This shows considerable reach and engagement with Project Glow Wear’s aims which are to increase awareness of the need to be visible at night while walking, cycling or running.

Preparations are underway for a winter promotion of active travel at one school in order to trial the new on-line travel tracker tool. This tool enables schools to record school travel data and to receive reports on that data. Three other schools are planning similar trials in the next few weeks.

4.3 GWRC Vehicle Fleet

In support of GWRC’s vehicle fleet policy and vision to lower CO₂ emissions, we now have eight electric vehicles in our fleet. We also have plans to replace the Metlink van with a full electric van in the coming months.

Our electric charging infrastructure has been extended so we have at least one charging station in our main office locations at Masterton, Upper Hutt, Shed 39, Walter St and Queen Elizabeth Park.

4.4 PTOM bus contracts and transition

Contracts with preferred tenderers, Tranzit and Uzabus, were executed on 16 June 2017, with transition activities now underway. A subsequent agreement with Tranzit includes the introduction of 32 electric buses over three years, commencing with an initial 10 electric buses in July 2018.

Negotiations have commenced with NZ Bus and Mana to agree prices for the bus units that were directly appointed to them.

Early start dates for the new bus contracts outside Wellington city are being investigated. The purpose of starting these contracts earlier than July 2018 would be to mitigate risks from the scale of change in July when Wellington city contracts, the new bus network and region-wide ticketing will go live. The early starts are dependent on operator readiness, together with GWRC's readiness from a business, systems and equipment perspective. Recommendations to ELT will be made during August.

In accordance with agreed transitional arrangements with NZ Bus, trolley buses will stop operating on 31 October. The transitional arrangements provide for continuity of service so customers will not be affected. The trolley buses will be replaced with any Wrightspeed converted buses that are available for service at that time with the balance to consist of diesel buses to make up the necessary capacity. The transitional arrangements will be in place until the new contracts commence in July 2018, when over 300 new buses, primarily latest technology Euro VI diesels, and the first ten full battery electric buses will commence service.

Wellington Cable Car Limited has let a contract for the removal of the trolley bus overhead wires and associated infrastructure. Detailed planning has commenced with removal due to start in November and continue for the following 12 months. Removal of an unused section of wire between Lambton Quay and Wakefield Street will take place over the coming months to test and refine the removal process.

4.5 Fares and ticketing

A "market sounding" for procurement of an integrated fares and ticketing solution has progressed well through June with a high level of interest from around the world. Submissions closed in early July and the responses will feed into the indicative business case under development.

Work on the Interim Bus Ticketing Solution with Snapper has progressed well with joint planning for transition well underway.

The 2016-17 fares review has resulted in a proposed fares package for public consultation. This is subject to a separate paper to Committee at this meeting.

4.6 Park and ride strategy development

Early work on the strategy development has involved a number of internal officer workshops to consider how park and ride provision fits within the wider strategic transport context, and to define the problem, benefits and strategic responses in relation to park and ride. Further information will be provided to councillors in early September.

4.7 Forum of regional transport operator CEOs

An inaugural Forum of Regional Transport Operator CEOs was hosted by GWRC on 18 July. The Forum, which has an independent Chair, provides an opportunity for GWRC and all bus, rail and ferry operators to take a system-wide look at the Metlink public transport system in terms of performance, customer satisfaction and safety. Participants also took the opportunity to break into a bus-only group to discuss bus transition. The Forum will be held approximately every six weeks.

4.8 Wellington city bus hub consultation

Public consultation as agreed by the joint GWRC and WCC Joint Transport Working Group was conducted to assist with choosing the best locations for bus hubs in Kilbirnie and Johnsonville, to support the new Wellington city bus network starting in July 2018. Around 400 submissions were received in the three-week consultation period, which ended on 14 July. The results are now being considered by the project team, which comprises both GWRC and WCC officers, and recommendations on bus hub locations will be made to both councils in August.

A Request for Proposal will be issued in early August to appoint a professional services firm to undertake detailed design of the bus hub shelters and to manage construction. Detailed design of the bus hubs will be undertaken in conjunction with WCC's urban design and infrastructure teams.

4.9 Bus shelters and bus stops across the region

Changes to bus stops to support improved bus services in Kapiti will be considered by the community boards representing Waikanae, Paraparaumu / Raumati, Paekakariki and Otaki following consultation with affected residents and community groups. This commences with Waikanae Community Board in late July and finishes with the Otaki Community Board mid-August.

5. Metlink Public Transport – operational matters

5.1 Rail operations

5.1.1 Service changes

A revised timetable has been established and agreed which will increase inter-peak service frequency, and include some tweaks to the peak to make the services more regular, and hence avoid operational conflicts. We are still working with stakeholders to establish the implementation date, as the timetable will require a complete re-organisation of rail network maintenance.

5.1.2 Wairarapa Service

GWRC has appointed an experienced rail consultant, Dr Murray King, to help identify short, medium and long-term solutions to improve services. Such changes include adjustments to timetables, review of stopping patterns, re-configuration of carriages etc. that might bring immediate improvements to the service.

A workshop of key players including representation for the Wairarapa councils is planned for the coming weeks.

GWRC is also working with KiwiRail (owner of the network) on the development of a business case seeking the estimated \$60 million of investment needed to bring the track back up to standard and eliminate speed restrictions.

5.1.3 Capital Connection

Work continues on the development of a business case for the continuation of the capital connection service. The next draft of the case will be presented to the Working Party on 16 August.

5.2 Bus and Ferry operations

5.2.1 Service changes

School bus services have been reviewed in the Newlands / Johnsonville / Churton Park area and service changes are scheduled for August 2017. Stakeholders (the affected schools and operators) have been involved in the review process and are comfortable with changes.

5.2.2 Requests to change school bus services

As part of the Annual Plan consultation we received a request from some students at Wellington East Girls College (WEGC) for changes to their school bus services in response to a change to the school finishing time.

On Wednesday afternoons throughout term time WEGC finish their school day at 2.15pm. The students felt that because of this there are capacity issues on the public bus network at this time - students use these services in the absence of school services.

Officers provided a detailed response to the students outlining the reasoning why we are not able to fulfil their request currently; the response explained the complexity of the bus network. The shift and work patterns of drivers are carefully managed by the operator in order to ensure worktime regulations are adhered to. What sometimes seems a minor change can have significant knock on effects to the wider transport network as driver shifts will be required to be amended and a period of consultation with drivers be entered into to confirm these changes. The bus operator also manages the allocation of buses in the most efficient way with buses linking to other trips throughout the network depending where trips start and end. Once more relatively minor changes can mean significant work in re-allocating buses and the correct bus type to particular trips.

Similarly we had a request to change services for Sacred Heart College in Lower Hutt and officers together with NZ Bus management met with the school to outline why we were unable to make the change requested and to provide alternative options for the students. At the meeting, officers showed the detail behind the current school routes, which Sacred Heart College shared with other schools, the driver and shift structure and bus allocation. Through this discussion, we achieved a shared understanding with Sacred Heart College that it would not be practical to amend the school bus services as requested.

Officers worked collaboratively with Sacred Heart College to provide alternate options for students travel plans. This resulted in production of a table of alternate services that students could use for their school travel, the majority of

which involved a short walk to use the public bus services that depart from the Queensgate Mall. Sacred Heart College published this information in their newsletter in order to communicate it to the wider school community. Officers visited the Queensgate Mall bus stops at school finishing time to ensure Sacred Heart students that chose to use these public services were supported in the change to their travel habits.

5.2.3 Special events & service disruptions

(a) Team NZ Victory Parade (Tuesday 11 July, 10am to 2pm)

Bus services were successfully diverted and managed during the road closure, with up-to-date information available on our website and in the real time information system (RTI). Staff were also available to assist customers along the parade route at closed bus stops, temporary bus stops and the bus hub at Wellington Station. Our presence on the day was well received by the public.

(b) Ngauranga Gorge slip (Tuesday 11 July, approx. 12:30pm)

Due to the full closure (followed by closure of all city-bound lanes) of State Highway 1 through the Ngauranga Gorge following a land slip, traffic in both directions was quickly affected, with the main alternative route into the city from the north via SH 58 very congested. As a result, northern suburbs bus services were reconfigured to connect with trains and to run between Johnsonville Station and suburbs with customers asked to use the train service to travel from the city to Johnsonville. This information was posted as early as possible on our Metlink website, RTI and on Twitter.

Although this represented a significant change to regular services and inconvenienced some customers, we received no negative feedback, with people understanding that the buses would otherwise have been caught in the resulting traffic congestion. Inbound rail patronage increased sharply the next morning, as people realised that rail would provide a good option to driving.

(c) Southerly storm event (Wednesday 12 July)

Directly following the Ngauranga Gorge slip, a southerly storm affected trolley bus and ferry services to the extent that they had to be cancelled for a period. Trolley bus services were cancelled because of damage to the overhead wire system – fortunately, this was confined to one day and was less disruptive than it might have been due to school holidays. There were fewer customers travelling than normal, and so more diesel buses were available. In addition, for 90 minutes or so the Ngauranga Gorge was closed again in both directions due to overhead signage being damaged in the wind.

Again, this information was posted early on our Metlink website, RTI and on Twitter to inform our customers.

5.2.4 Paremata Roundabout

Officers have had further meetings with NZTA to discuss options for improving the safety of buses exiting Paremata Railway Station and joining the State Highway.

NZTA has committed to proceed with and fund a two-lane exit from the park and ride car park. It is estimated that this work will take approximately two months to complete.

Other options are also being investigated, including:

- Ramp signalling (this manages the rate at which vehicles merge with motorway traffic from an on-ramp).
- Variable speed activation for northbound traffic when vehicles exit the park and ride.
- Approach signage/markings, to slow approaching vehicles (eg red surfacing across the road, where '50' speed limit roundels were proposed to be installed, advanced warning signage, flashing warning lights and/or any other options to control approach speeds and increase gaps for exiting vehicles).

5.2.5 Miramar bus capacity

Three main commuter bus routes serve Miramar: Routes 2, 30 and 31. Route 2 travels from Miramar to the Wellington CBD. Route 30 travels from Seatoun, through Miramar and on to the CBD. Route 31 travels from the north of Miramar through to the CBD.

Patronage analysis shows that all of these routes have strong patronage on particular peak trips, which mirrors feedback from customers and community groups in Miramar. Through this patronage analysis, officers have also been able to identify peak trips where there is spare capacity. A list of services with spare capacity has been supplied to the Metlink Contact Centre to assist in providing advice to customers.

Officers have re-checked the capacity provided for Miramar in the new network and are confident that the capacity provided will meet the demand, including during peak periods.

5.3 Metlink customer services and information

5.3.1 Digital – website, social media and app

(a) Website

In late May we asked over 450 public transport customers what they thought of the Metlink website – this included an online survey and face-to-face interviews. The results were positive with most features rating 4 out of 5 for ease of use. Customers were also generous with their ideas on things we can improve and suggestions for new features. In the next few weeks there will be changes in the journey planner and a new “Locate” option to allow customers to track their bus on a map.

We now have over 25,000 My Metlink accounts. The majority of people who have set up these accounts subscribe to receive notifications and alerts on services making it a very valuable database, particularly during weather events or breakdowns.

(b) Twitter

We have almost 10,500 followers on Twitter. We used twitter extensively during the week that Lion supporters were in town. We identified this as the most useful channel to “talk” to them as they may not necessarily visit the Metlink website. We trialled new messaging around accessing the stadium via the spiral to reduce congestion in the railway station. We also tweeted

departure platforms for rail services just before the end of the game. Both received positive feedback

(c) **Metlink Commuter App**

As of the end of June we have had over 25,000 downloads of the Metlink App. We deployed an update to resolve a bug that meant bus services cancelled in RTI were not always appearing as “Cancelled” in the app.

5.4 Customer Experience

5.4.1 Customer satisfaction survey

Our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted in March this year. A separate report on the high-level findings has been prepared on this matter for this meeting of the Sustainable Transport Committee. Further analysis of the results and an action plan for highlighted areas of customer improvement will be undertaken and presented to the next Sustainable Transport Committee meeting. The survey results will also be distributed to the public via our website and Metlink accounts.

5.5 Total Mobility

5.5.1 RFP for Assessment Services

The RFP process for the provision of Total Mobility Assessment Services has now been completed and negotiations are progressing well with Presbyterian Support Central as the preferred supplier.

5.5.2 Total Mobility Customer Satisfaction Survey

In the latest results from our annual survey, 99% of customers surveyed have rated Total Mobility positively.

6. Responses to public participation - 20 June 2017

Mike Mellor spoke about item 5 and item 7 on the agenda – Let’s Get Wellington Moving Programme update; and General Managers’ report.

Let’s Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) – Mr Mellor welcomed the release of the background papers on long list assessment and scenario development, but questioned why it had taken so long to release them. He suggested an environmental or health assessment should have been part of this assessment work. He asked why light rail was mentioned only as being ‘future-proofed’ in the work so far, rather than a project to be implemented like various roading projects.

Barry Mein, LGWM Programme Director, provided an oral update to the Committee following public participation and responded directly to Mr Mellor’s points on behalf of the LGWM programme. Mr Mein noted that environment and health impacts are taken into account in the LGWM evaluation criteria, but are not “headline” objectives. He also outlined the work commissioned to look at mass transit corridors, which will include an assessment of the suitability of routes for light rail.

Bus/rail connections in Wairarapa – Mr Mellor asked about timetabling of trains and buses and connectivity between these modes. This matter is also the

subject of an official information request under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act and will be responded to accordingly.

7. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

7.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

Report approved by:

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