



Report 09.236
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Committee Transport & Access Committee
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Wainuiomata Service Review

1. Purpose

To provide information on proposed changes to Wainuiomata bus services following a review of public and school bus services in Wainuiomata.

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

The review was undertaken to address specific issues of poor reliability, insufficient capacity (on some peak trips), lack of simplicity and efficiency of school services.

The Committee was advised of the review on 18 March 2009 (refer Report 09.131). The Wainuiomata Community Board has been consulted and some of their feedback has been incorporated into the current proposals.

4. Community Board feedback

The following key messages in response to the proposed changes were received from the Wainuiomata Community Board at its meeting of 8 April 2009:

1. General support for the proposed changes, especially connections to the hospital;
2. Reservations in regard to removing service around the Parkway Loop (Mohaka/Manutuke/Meremere Streets). The Board requested that at the very least some peak hour service be provided around the Parkway Loop;

3. Greater Wellington should provide residents an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes before they are finalised.

In response to this feedback the proposed changes were revised to provide some peak trips around the Parkway Loop. In addition, and as discussed with the Community Board, advertising has been placed and a press release issued advising residents that changes will be considered at this meeting.

More recent feedback from a Community Board member has requested that the Parkway Loop service also be retained outside peak times to cater for elderly and others that travel in the inter-peak period. This is discussed below.

5. The proposed changes

The service review has now been completed with the proposed improvements set out below. Route maps and further information on these changes is provided in Appendix A.

The proposed improvements, which can be delivered within the existing contract budget, are:

1. Simpler route structure – a single combined bus route to Wainuiomata North has been identified to replace the existing complex mix of Route 160 and Route 165 trips with a single simple route and regular departure times;
2. Improved travel times and access for some people – travel times will improve for people currently using Route 165 between Wainuiomata High School and Wellington Road North as buses will no longer travel around Parkway Loop. Access will improve for people living on Wellington Road North who will now have an evening service and more frequency daytime services;
3. Improved reliability – bus travel times have been updated to reflect changes in traffic and travel patterns;
4. Increased peak capacity – frequency has been increased to 10 minutes between 7am and 8am on both routes to reduce overcrowding on some trips and provide capacity for future passenger growth;
5. Improved connections with express trains – peak trips will connect with more express trains to/from Wellington;
6. More efficient and simpler school routes – school services have been modified to follow the same route as public services within Wainuiomata and one morning school service (to St Bernard's College) has been replaced with more frequent services on the public routes;
7. Trial connections to Hutt Hospital – selected trips will connect to Hutt Hospital with two morning trips to the hospital and three afternoon trips returning from the hospital;

8. Improved Metlink timetables – the simplified route structure (refer above) will enable us to provide a single Metlink timetable with information on all bus services within Wainuiomata. There are currently two separate Metlink timetables.

There are inevitably some trade-offs required to enable delivery of all proposed improvements, especially the simpler route structure, regular departure times and improved access for some people. The required trade-offs are as follows:

1. Longer travel times for some people

The simpler route structure, regular departure times and improved access for some people relies on combining Routes 160 and 165.

This will mean those people who currently access the more direct Route 160 from Norfolk Street, Wise Street, Nelson Crescent and Fitzherbert Road will have slightly longer travel times as all buses will now travel via Wellington Road North. The potential increase in travel time, however, has been minimised by reducing service around Parkway Loop.

Those people who currently use Route 165 in this area and either Route 160 or 165 along Wellington Road will not be affected by longer travel times but will benefit from a simpler service with more regular departure times. Those people living off Wellington Road north of Norfolk Street will also have improved access as they will now have an evening service and more frequent daytime services.

2. Reduced service around Parkway Loop (Mohaka, Manutuke and Meremere Streets)

The proposed simpler route structure will result in a reduced service around Parkway Loop. The service will now only include two morning peak services and three afternoon peak services around the Parkway Loop.

There are approximately 560 households around the Parkway Loop. 100% of these households are currently within 5 minutes walk of an hourly service and 50% are within 5 minutes walk of a half-hourly service. The proposed changes will mean 50% of these households will be within 5 minutes walk of a half-hourly service and 95% will be within 10 minutes walk. Walking times are based on a relatively slow walk with a pushchair.

The main reason for reducing service around the Parkway Loop is to mitigate the longer travel times resulting from the simpler route structure and regular departure times. However, there is also an efficiency improvement. The current proposal will free up approximately \$30,000 for investment in improved services elsewhere on the network whereas if service were to be provided around the Parkway Loop contract payments would need to increase approximately \$16,000 (these figures are estimates only based on modelling).

6. Conclusion and next steps

The proposed changes represent a substantial overall improvement in bus services for Wainuiomata. There is some reduction in services around the Parkway Loop, but residents of this area will still have ready access to services, and the overall improvements cannot effectively be delivered without this change.

The next steps involve agreeing the final timetable with the bus operator, preparing new timetables and confirming a go-live date. It is proposed to implement these changes within the next 6 months.

7. Communication

The proposed changes will be communicated prior to implementation.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Notes that changes to the Wainuiomata bus services will be implemented within the next six months subject to contract variation negotiations with the bus operator.*

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Appendix A: Proposed changes to Wainuiomata Bus Services