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Committee Economic Wellbeing Committee
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General Managers' report to the Economic Wellbeing Committee on 12 September 2013

1. Purpose

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

2. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

3. Public Participation

Chris Horne, Donald McDonald and Alexia Pickering all spoke to item 10 on the combined Wellbeing Committee agenda – Public Transport signage and information.

Chris Horne

Mr Horne raised a number of issues with the placing of advertising on the exterior of buses, including both branding material and advertisements for products and services. Mr Horne was also concerned about Metlink advertisements including winning entries in public transport art competitions.

Greater Wellington Regional Council's response:

Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) contracts with bus operators currently allow them to place advertising where they choose on their buses. As part of the introduction of operating contracts under the new Public Transport Operating Model, advertising on all public transport vehicles will be reviewed.

In terms of Metlink advertisements, we are not aware of any advertising over bus or train windows. As owner of the trains, the Committee passed a specific resolution with respect to the public art competition to allow one SW and one Matangi car available for the campaign, with the wrap on the windows to be restricted to 30% maximum with Contavision material at 40%.

Donald McDonald

Mr McDonald raised a number of matters relating to bus operations as set out below:

1. Please remove all advertising from the windows of buses.

GWRC's response:

GWRC's contracts with bus operators currently allow them to place advertising where they choose on their buses. As part of the introduction of operating contracts under the new Public Transport Operating Model, advertising on all public transport vehicles will be reviewed.

2. Issue with the locating of Real Time Information (RTI) signs, i.e. the need to be able to see the signs from nearby seating.

GWRC's response:

In most cases the RTI display sign at bus stops also replaces the existing bus stop/information pole. Locations are therefore constrained, but display signs are consistently mounted as close to the head of the bus stop as is practicable. This is for blind or partially sighted bus users who may use the sign as a cue to the location where the bus will stop. There are inevitably some exceptions, dictated by conditions at particular stop locations.

Where possible, care has been taken to ensure that RTI display signs are visible from the most frequently used waiting areas (particularly where it is likely that people will wait in a bus shelter, if one is provided). Specific modifications have been made to some locations to achieve this, for instance by mounting the display sign on a shorter pole to ensure it is visible by passengers in shelters or under awnings.

At rail stations the location constraints are greater, as the potential waiting areas are so extensive and in many cases there is a single RTI display sign providing information for services in both directions. It is therefore possible that passengers may need to revise their favoured waiting position if they want to monitor the RTI display sign constantly.

3. Request that bus route numbers are shown on the front, side and back of buses.

GWRC's response:

All the current urban bus fleet contracted by GWRC has bus routes displayed on the front of the buses, approximately 60% of the fleet has bus routes on the rear of the buses and at least 80% of the fleet has bus routes displayed on the side of the buses.

The "Requirements of Urban Buses In New Zealand 2011" (RUB) published by the New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA), which GWRC is working to implement, requires that all new standard urban buses entering a region's contracted bus fleet meet the following for signs:

- Front forward-facing three digit/character route-number and destination combination sign $\geq 1500\text{mm}$ wide located at or above the top of the windscreen.
 - Near side, as close as possible to the front entrance, a route number and destination repeater sign preferably fitted at the top of the first side window so that it can be seen over the heads of any queuing passengers.
 - At the back of the bus a rearward-facing three digit/character route-number only sign at a height $\geq 1500\text{mm}$ and $\leq 2500\text{mm}$ above ground level and central or left of centre, i.e. toward the nearside of the bus.
4. Suggest that GWRC considers installing signage on footpaths initiating the direction and distance to next bus stop e.g. 3 minutes walk to next bus stop.

GWRC's response:

GWRC is currently working with a contractor to provide signage that includes way-finding signage at key points and interchanges. However, it may not be possible in terms of consent or budget to place signs for the next bus stop at every existing bus stop or at intermediate locations.

5. What is the timeline for the installation of RTI signs along the Golden Mile?

GWRC's response:

The schedule for the installation and commissioning of RTI display signs on the Golden Mile (between Courtenay Place and the north end of Lambton Quay) begins in early October 2013.

6. Concern that a number of buses are not showing on the RTI system

GWRC's response:

Buses may not show on the RTI system for a number of operational, behavioural and technical reasons. A concerted programme to ensure that RTI system performance reaches and maintains the highest possible levels is in hand in conjunction with operators. This involves detailed monitoring and the follow-up and resolution of problems using a series of documented processes. An on-going reduction in the small proportion of journeys not registered by the system is being achieved.

7. When there is a RTI display, the screen often tends to hide the number on the pole. It needs to be visible so that it can be referred to in reports.

GWRC's response:

If Mr MacDonald could provide details of the locations where he believes this to be an issue then officers are happy to visit the sites and see if there is any changes that can be made to improve the visibility at the relevant sites.

8. Bus stop sign on Taranaki Street is damaged.

GWRC's response:

We believe this stop to be no. 7913; the complaint has been logged with our maintenance contractor and will be repaired shortly.

9. NZ Bus ID is too small on buses

GWRC's response:

There is currently no standard specification for Bus ID signs. GWRC will provide this item to NZTA for their consideration when they next update the "Requirements of Urban Buses In New Zealand 2011" (RUB)

10. There is mould, graffiti, and an incorrect on-street timetable at the bus stop on Brougham St

GWRC's response:

The on-street timetables at the two stops on Brougham St have been checked and are correct. All bus stops are visited at least once a month; any mould and graffiti will be dealt with on the next visit to the stop by our maintenance and cleaning contractor.

11. Could the payment of on-board cash fares be removed to assist in speeding up loading and assisting when buses are running late?

GWRC's response:

An increasing proportion of bus boardings are made using stored value smartcards on operators' proprietary fare payment systems, and only one permits the time-consuming top-up of cards actually on the bus. GWRC's planned integrated electronic ticketing project will facilitate electronic payment on rail, harbour ferry and different bus operators' services using a single card, and will require top-ups to be carried out off-bus. The preferred Fare Structure identified in June proposed retaining cash fares, and the ability to pay by cash is unlikely to be completely eliminated.

Alexia Pickering

Ms Pickering raised a number of issues with disabled signage and access at Wellington railway station, and rail operating practices in relation to disabled persons.

Officers met with Deb Hume (General Manager, KiwiRail Passenger Group) to review the areas of concern and recommendations included in the submission made by Alexia Pickering.

1. That directional signage be displayed at the external steps of the Railway Station.

GWRC's response:

There is currently one sign on the left side of the entrance (see photo), and another on the wall leading to the disabled entry. KiwiRail will install a sign to the right of the entrance. They will also review the size of the signs.



2. That directional signage be displayed in the foyer, before the steps are reached, indicating where the accessible exit is located.

GWRC's response:

KiwiRail will review the hanging signs in the concourse (see photo) and add accessible information where appropriate.



Metlink signs in the subway (see photo below) will also have accessible symbols added (see graphic) and the symbols have been ordered.



3. A 'Mobility Assistance' sign be placed above ticketing counter or where considered most appropriate.

GWRC's response:

It is not considered appropriate to select individual ticket counters for mobility assistance as each has its own ticketing function (metro, long distance) and passengers need to visit the appropriate window for their journey. There is a mobility assistance sign at the entrance to the Customer Services Kiosk.

4. All signage to comply with requirement of F8 in respect of size, contrast, height.

GWRC's response:

This is to be confirmed as signage is installed as part of the Public Transport signage and information project.

5. That the needs of sensory and physically disabled passengers, including the elderly, be recognised in Report 13.728.

GWRC's response:

The public transport signage suite has been designed to be legible to the wheelchair user group and the elderly through placement, size and contrast.

In addition to the five recommendations above, other areas of concern were noted in the report. In response, KiwiRail are also reviewing the process for disabled passengers waiting on the platform and staff assistance for boarding trains. Also, the lifts next to the stairs were checked at the time of the visit and were operational.

4. Public Transport

4.1 Rail Operations

4.1.1 Rail Services

On Friday 16 August at 2.31pm services were disrupted due to an earthquake. As the earthquake struck just prior to the PM peak, there was major impact on commuters. Services were ceased and did not resume until Saturday morning. There were no bus replacements available, due to the normal peak bus demand, and commuters had to rely on the generosity of friends and strangers to provide rides. This was evidenced at the Wellington Station where Tranz Metro staff, with Police assistance, were requesting drivers to stop and provide commuters a ride closer to home.

Damage to the railway was minimal however, due to the intensity of the earthquake, KiwiRail's procedures require services to be stopped and visual inspections to be carried out once advised of an event categorised as 7 or above on the "Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) Scale". Subsequent significant aftershocks prolonged these inspections.

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union held their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 21 August and services were reduced between 10.30am and 3.00pm on the Johnsonville, Kapiti and Hutt Valley lines.

Despite all of the above, overall Punctuality for August was on target at 95% (on-time within 5 minutes) and 94% of services were delivered (Reliability).

Wairarapa line services performance has improved in the past months with the introduction of the SE carriages in July. However service on this line still falls well below that of the other lines and work continues with KiwiRail to resolve operational issues. Options are being explored to address some of the complaints regarding the level of amenity experience on the SE cars compared with the SW cars.

4.1.2 Rail Rolling Stock

a) Johnsonville line

The rail head profile has now worn to a smooth finish post the grinding operation and the track side flange lubrication has been reinstated. This will be monitored over the coming weeks in order to determine the impact of flange lubrication on the noise levels. Once we are satisfied that the relationship between track side flange lubrication, its impact on line adhesion and its impact on noise levels is fully understood, we will look to reinstate track side friction modification. In the meantime, reports from residents on noise levels indicate that, although the results of the rail grinding are generally positive, there are still times when screeching can be heard and this is particularly noticeable after long dry spells.

b) EMU fleet utilisation

Both the Matangi and Ganz fleets are performing to expectations, with daily fleet availability and reliability targets being consistently met. An extension of the Matangi A1 inspection period from one to two weeks has been trialled over the last three months, with no impact on the trial train's reliability. Accordingly, Rotem has agreed to extend the interval for the A1 check across the entire Matangi fleet. This will assist with re-allocating resources across the fleets and other depot and fleet improvement initiatives.

c) Ganz Mavag

Arrangements to ship the first tranche off shore are now under way.

d) Carriage fleet

Within a carriage the most critical item of equipment (other than the locomotive) is the generator. When this fails the service cannot run and over the previous 12 months a number of services have been cancelled due to generator failure. A new maintenance regime will be implemented to reduce the failure rate of the generator sets.

4.1.3 Rail Infrastructure

a) EMU depot

The southern portion (1940s building) of the EMU Depot will be demolished over the December 2013 – February 2014 period, as it now represents a safety hazard and is no longer required. This part of the depot was always intended to be demolished upon completion of the new section in 2010 and the commissioning of the Matangi train. Recent storms have uncovered asbestos related issues which make it imperative to demolish the building as soon as practical. An asbestos report has been commissioned and, although the building is deemed safe at present, a number of processes will need to be followed as part of the demolition process. These processes will be managed through our consulting engineers (Beca).

b) Waterloo roof

Officers continue to work with engineers to find the best solution to renew the steel framework and support columns of the Waterloo roof. Initial responses to a tender released earlier in the year exceeded price expectations and have driven a new approach. A new tender is being developed which will have a clearer focus on life extension.

c) Porirua car park additional parking

Having purchased additional land at Porirua from the NZTA for car parking, a development plan is now under consideration. Initial focus will be on the area immediately to the south of Mungavin Bridge, which would extend the number of car parks by 130 – 150. Lighting and security enhancements are included in this work. A following phase will seek to develop the entire area.

d) Bridge and sub-way repairs

Tender documents are being prepared for release to the market for the repair and overhaul of Trentham and Linden bridges and the Plimmerton subway. The tender is due to be released mid to late September and, following the award, works are expected to start during the Christmas block of line.

e) Other station works

Various other works are currently being estimated as part of the general maintenance programme. These include: re-roofing Porirua station, Stage 2 of the electrical upgrade at Masterton station, Paraparaumu electrical upgrade and new platform lighting for Linden station.

4.2 Bus and Ferry Operations

4.2.1 Bus services

a) Street events

There were no major street events during this reporting period, but rather a small number of temporary bus stop closures due to road works.

b) Major road works

Willis Street Grand Arcade

Building work is underway adjacent to the Willis Street Grand Arcade bus stop for up to two months, while the building that incorporates the entrance to the Grand Arcade is demolished. At this stage the bus stop remains open to customers, but GWRC officers will monitor the situation in case of any changes in circumstances that may impact the usage of the stop during this period.

Basin Reserve Bridge

Initial discussions have commenced with NZTA in respect to the operational impact to public transport services, in particular to trolley bus services, during the construction phase of the Basin Reserve Bridge project. Further detail will be reported to the Committee as the project progresses and the full impact and the mitigation options are identified. There is a possibility that the construction phase may coincide in part with another major project which is the seismic strengthening of the Hataitai bus tunnel portals. GWRC officers will be working towards coordination with all other parties over both projects, in an attempt to minimise impacts.

Hataitai Bus Tunnel

Seismic strengthening of the tunnel portals is likely to commence in September 2014. GWRC officers are discussing the impacts on bus services and working with Wellington City Council (WCC) officers. This work is estimated at this stage to take approximately 10 months and will include periods where the tunnel is closed to all traffic, although initial indications are that this may be limited to hours where buses are not operating.



c) CVIU and NZTA Bus Roadside Inspections

Roadside inspections of Go Wellington and Valley Flyer buses by the Commercial Vehicle Inspection Unit (CVIU) and NZTA were undertaken on 28 and 29 August. These inspections were for safety items identified previously through roadside inspections in May of this year as fleet-wide issues; principally oil leaks, evidence of exhaust fumes inside the bus, and maintenance of emergency exits.

These recent checks have identified a number of buses continuing to show oil leaks but, as we understand at the time of writing, there is no further evidence of exhaust fume leaks or emergency exit faults.

As a result of the failures a number of bus trips were missed, particularly on 28 August. Unfortunately, on the same day the overhead network was damaged by a third party and so a large number of trolley bus trips were affected. Residual effects of the failures (all these buses need to be rectified and complete further Certificate of Fitness checks) are expected to last through to the end of the first week in September.

4.2.2 Service reviews

a) Wellington

The Wellington City Bus Review (WCBR) is an area wide review of Wellington City bus services south of Grenada North. Public, community representative and stakeholder input has been an integral part of the WCBR. The first round of public consultation was in June and July 2009 and the final round in February and March 2012.

The community of Highbury continued to express varying views on the route design for their area as part of the WCBR. Consultation continued with Highbury community representatives, which concluded with a targeted public consultation with the Highbury community during the period mid-July and to mid-August. The consultation included three options for consideration. Option B, Highbury to Wellington CBD via Aro Valley, was the preferred option. 80% of respondents indicated this as their first choice. A report has been drafted on this consultation and will be distributed to Councillors and the Highbury community representatives by the end of September.

Since February 2012 extensive consultation has been undertaken with community representatives and stakeholders in order to gain further feedback; officers have taken this feedback into consideration during decision making on the network. Officers consider that, as a consequence of this feedback, they are well aware of community and stakeholder views and, as a result, believe that the public consultation part of the WCBR is complete.

The network design concept was amended, taking into account the above feedback, and was approved by the Economic Wellbeing Committee in Report 12.497 in November 2012. Following this approval draft timetables were formulated. Feedback from community groups and stakeholders was received on the draft timetables and subsequent amendments have been made. Officers acknowledge there remain some minor routing issues to be resolved.

The WCBR has provided a network design for Wellington City bus services. This area-wide review has now concluded and the planning for operational implementation has begun. A summary paper on the key outcomes of the WCBR will be distributed to Councillors and posted on the GWRC website by the end of September.

It is anticipated that the outcomes of the WCBR will be implemented in stages from 2015 onwards. The operational implementation plan will be complex, due to the interlinking of service across suburbs. During operational implementation planning a number of concurrent projects will be taken into consideration, the most significant of these being the Public Transport Spine Study (PTSS).

The purpose of the PTSS is to provide a high quality, reliable and safe service between Wellington Railway Station and the regional hospital in Newtown. The Regional Transport Committee has adopted Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as the preferred medium-long term option, with potential route extensions to Karori, Island Bay, Seatoun and Miramar. The BRT routes proposed by the PTSS are largely consistent with the outcomes of the Wellington City Bus Review, although there are some areas of detail to be resolved. Material changes to the network will be reported through the PTSS Project.

b) Wellington City School Bus Review

As the Wellington City Bus Review Network has been approved the Wellington City School Bus Review can now begin. This review will be undertaken in two stages.

During the first stage we will review the performance of the current services and make changes where improvements can be made within the short term and within current budgets. The second stage will look to address the impact the WCBR has on the school bus network and will look to implement changes concurrently with the implementation of WCBR. Consultation will occur with the schools during each of these phases.

c) Network Operating Frameworks

Officers are working in partnership with NZTA and local authorities in developing Network Operational Frameworks (NOFs) for a number of areas in the Wellington region; these being Wellington CBD, Johnsonville, and the Hutt Valley.

The NOF is an agreed process gained through a series of workshops. The outcome of these workshops will be an agreed view of the road network hierarchy, as well as mode usage on the network. One of the deliverables of the project is an analysis tool which can be used in the decision making process for any transport or land use projects. The analysis tool will show performance issues to be highlighted, as well as scenario testing to mitigate these issues.

4.2.3 Bus stops and shelter

a) Asset management

Survey data and financial forecast reporting of all bus stop assets in the region including the condition, performance and aesthetics of the infrastructure at each stop has been completed, and the consultant undertaking the work has presented a draft report to officers. This work will feed into the developing prioritisation framework tool to assist with long term asset and budget planning, and will provide a transparent and consistent approach to bus stop development. Officers are now analysing this data and developing the work plan for the year.

The development of bus stop level of service categories is underway. Once completed, each bus stop will be put into a category which will define the asset level of service at that stop, which will provide a consistency of assets at each stop and will reflect that stop's functionality.

b) Asset work plan

The development of this year's work plan for asset maintenance, shelter renewals and developments is underway. Renewals and development work plans will have a focus on three years, with maintenance being set from this year's data capture and the out years from the contractor's annual maintenance plan.

The need for better signage at the Days Bay ferry wharf has been identified and the new signage is to be installed and will be a pilot for the bus sign infrastructure.

4.3 Real Time Information project

Final testing of Real Time Information for rail is in progress. Once testing is complete, Real Time Information will initially be provided on the Johnsonville line prior to being rolled out on all rail services later in September.

Once real time is operating on rail, the only remaining sections of the project will be the 14 Golden Mile signs. Final approvals are being worked through with Wellington City Council, with a view to having as many of the signs as

possible installed prior to the 1 December moratorium on work on the footpaths. The first signs will be installed and commissioned in October.

4.4 Integrated Fares and Ticketing

The project Steering Group and Working Groups have been established and are working towards the procurement of a lead advisor once NZTA funding approval is finalised.

5. Environment Management

5.1 Basin Bridge Proposal: Board of Inquiry recommending process

There have been some inquiries by Councillors about the process GWRC went through in providing support to the Basin Bridge proposal being heard by a Board of Inquiry.

By way of background, the Minister of Transport announced in late 2010 that all applications for Roads of National Significance projects (RoNS) would be made to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to be heard by the Board of Inquiry. The Minister's position was based, in part, on the tests under the Resource Management Act (the Act) for proposals of national significance. Those tests include such matters as significant infrastructure, significant environmental effects, effects on a region or more than one district, a local authority's capacity to process applications and the generation of widespread public interest.

As required by the Act, once NZTA had given notice to EPA of its intentions to lodge, the EPA then formally asked GWRC in September 2012 for a view on the Basin Bridge consenting process. We responded in October 2012, confirming our officers' view that the proposal meets many of the tests for national significance and, as such, should be processed by EPA. Both letters are available for Councillors to view, should they wish.

While the NZTA's position on national consenting of RoNS projects to date has been clear, our general position in working with both NZTA and EPA has recognised the intent of the Act and acknowledged the national interests served through the national consenting process.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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