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Bus stop infrastructure

1. Purpose

To agree the policy and process used by officers to evaluate bus infrastructure¹ prioritise bus shelter developments and renewals and allocate spending in the Wellington region.

2. Background

2.1 Policy context

The Regional Public Transport Plan (PT Plan) includes a number of policies and actions which encourage the standardising, improvement and development of bus stop assets in the region. The key policies from the PT Plan relating to bus stop infrastructure include:

Policy 1c: *Provide a consistent customer experience across the public transport network*

Action - Standardise levels of service for infrastructure (including stations, stops and interchanges) through the asset management process

Policy 2e: *Ensure that all public transport infrastructure and facilities meet quality and safety standards*

Action – Encourage and coordinate improvements in the design and capacity of stops, stations and terminals to meet demand

Action – Use consistent and clear signage and branding at stops, stations and terminals, and at interchanges and connection points, to facilitate easy transfers between services

¹ Includes poles, RTI signs, Totems, bus stop signs and shelters

Policy 4e: Provide simple, visible and intuitive information to customers

Action – Provide up-to-date timetable information at stops, stations and terminals, with real-time displays at stations and major stops.

Action – Provide way-finding signs at stations, major stops and harbour ferry terminals

Policy 6b: Review services to ensure they meet customer needs

Action – Undertake targeted reviews of services within units (or groups of units) triggered by issues such as changing patronage patterns, low patronage, customer complaints and new opportunities

Policy 6c: Monitor and continuously improve infrastructure

Action – Monitor and managed assets owned by GWRC and Greater Wellington Rail Limited in accordance with GWRC's Public Transport Asset Management Plan

Action – Continue to consolidate the monitoring and management of public transport infrastructure.

2.2 Operational background

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has responsibility for the planning and funding of the public transport (PT) network. GWRC owns and maintains most of the bus stop infrastructure in the region (there are ~2,800 bus stops in our region). The location, condition and recognition of bus stop assets by the public are key aspects affecting the performance of PT services. A table has been provided in Attachment 1 summarising the current ownership and maintenance responsibilities for bus stop assets.

Under the Local Government Act 1974 it was not possible for GWRC to own these assets. GWRC has provided funding to territorial authorities (TA's) for the procurement and maintenance of these PT assets, because PT is a key GWRC activity, and the infrastructure has an impact on the operation of PT services.

The Local Government Act 2002 enabled GWRC to own the assets. Since that change, GWRC has been progressively working towards owning fixed PT infrastructure assets, in order to achieve efficiency and consistency in asset management across the region's PT network.

The majority of current funding is provided for maintenance and renewals of existing infrastructure. The funding available for developments and major interchange renewals is limited. In order to begin implementing the Regional Public Transport Plan policies and actions, funding is also required for planned development of bus stop infrastructure.

No policy currently exists to guide decisions around the provision of bus stop infrastructure, particularly developments. Currently bus stop assets across the region

are renewed with modern assets in response to a poor condition assessment. There are also a small number which have been upgraded in response to customer requests. While being responsive is important, funding should be allocated where it will be most effective. In this case where there is evidence to support increased service levels and which would result in closing the asset gap (for further detail on asset gaps see section 6 of this report)

3. Policy objective

This policy will improve asset planning and management of the bus stop infrastructure in the future. We are:

- (a) Enhancing the way we measure our levels of service
- (b) Developing a set of categories to define our levels of service
- (c) Formulating a set of criteria for assessing bus stops against these levels of service
- (d) Developing operational tools which assist asset managers to identify and prioritise spending on bus stop assets.

In the past, levels of service have concentrated on maintenance and renewal of the assets identified as poor condition, with those assets being replaced as part of the renewals programme.

In the future asset managers will, in addition to managing the maintenance and renewals, also use the criteria to assess the bus stops and identify development priorities.

The Asset Management Plan (AMP) process requires GWRC to set levels of service for assets. Our levels of service are based on customer needs, demand and volume. By setting these levels of service we can better plan and fund asset developments which match the patronage, function and location of the stops so that the facilities in place meet the needs of passengers. For example, where there are a high number of passengers using a stop we can assess when the stop should be upgraded rather than wait until it appears on the renewals schedule, where we would simply replace like for like assets.

In addition, until Wellington City Council (WCC) bus stop assets are transferred to GWRC, we would encourage WCC to also adopt this policy so that consistency can be achieved across the region.

This operational policy will provide clear guidance around the criteria used when making decisions about bus stop infrastructure, and will result in robust and transparent decision making.

4. Operational policy

The purpose of the bus infrastructure policy is to clearly outline the decision making process used by GWRC when considering bus stop infrastructure. This policy

provides a framework for robust decision making and recording of those decisions to inform asset planning and expenditure into the future.

Officers propose the following draft operational policy:

GWRC will aim to manage the prioritisation of spending by:

- closing the asset gaps by 2030*
- ensuring, through prudent asset & data management, that there are no assets in poor or very poor condition by 2020*.

(* Subject to affordability and LTP & AMP processes)

GWRC will provide efficient & effective bus stop infrastructure in the Region by:

- Categorising bus stops in the wellington region according to patronage, function and location
- Setting the levels of service for bus stop assets
- Assessing the asset gaps at bus stops
- Setting the criteria to be used when assessing bus stop spending
- Developing and using operational tools to prioritise closing the asset gaps over time
- Identifying stops for optimisation to free up funding
- Recording decisions made about assets expenditure to inform future decision making.

5. Level of Service and bus stop categories

Bus stops in the Wellington region will be broadly categorised (1-5) according to patronage, function and location.

Categorisation of bus stops will establish the level of assets provided at stops within each category. The level of assets provides the level of service.

The assets provided at stops will be cumulative – category 1 stops will have basic assets provided while category 4 and 5 will have both the basic plus more sophisticated assets provided. The table below summarises the criteria which will be used to assign bus stops to categories and the corresponding level of service/assets for each category.

Category	Key stop function/location	Level of service determined by	Level of service/Assets (cumulative)
1	Set down mainly	Patronage per month LOW	Metlink sign Pole (if needed)
2	Limited service	Patronage per month MEDIUM	Hardstand (footpath or pad) Timetable and case RP5 and parking restriction Bus box
3	All day service Local shops/community facilities	Patronage per month MEDIUM TO HIGH	Shelter/covered area with seating Increased signage
4	CBD Shopping centre/complex Key attractor/major destinations Significant employment	Geographic location HIGH PATRONAGE	RTI Totem
5	Interchange/Hub	Geographic location HIGH TO VERY HIGH PATRONAGE	Larger shelter

In determining whether a stop is a category 4 or 5 an assessment of the following features will be undertaken and will include some or all of the following:

- High usage CBD stops – >5000 passenger boardings per month (eg: Courtenay Place, Manners St)
- Large shopping centres and complexes (eg: Queensgate)
- Key attractor/major destinations (eg: hospitals, medical centres, universities)
- Major visitor destinations ie: locations with many non-regular bus users (eg: Wellington Zoo, Wellington International Airport and Zealandia.)
- Significant employment areas ie: bus stops serving significant local or regional areas of employment (eg: Lambton Quay, The Terrace)

- Interchange bus stops ie: bus stops at key passenger interchanges between buses and/or buses and trains (eg: Wellington Station, Waterloo Interchange, Queensgate and Porirua Station)
- High visibility locations ie: to maximise the visibility of GWRC's investment in good and improved public transport assets and to encourage new users, high visibility and high foot/vehicle traffic locations will be well resourced (eg: Courtenay Place, Manners St)

6. Asset Gap

Using the existing asset audit information, asset managers will identify the 'asset gap' for all of the bus stops in the region. The asset gap is the difference between what is provided at a stop today and what assets could be provided at a stop based on the category it falls within (1-5).

Once known, the asset gap can then be quantified with a dollar value assigned to each asset within the categories, allowing an overall cost to be calculated for closing the asset gap.

Operational tools will assist asset managers to prioritise the funding available for use at the most beneficial stops. These tools are in the process of being built.

These tools allow the asset managers to work towards prioritising and closing the asset gaps.

The tools are used to assess the relevance of the following factors:

- (a) The number and condition of the existing assets at a stop and the function and location of the stop;
- (b) The patronage, number of routes and frequency of services at a stop;
- (c) The physical constraints of the stop for example, relative exposure to weather, gradient between stops;
- (d) The distance between other stops and shelters in the vicinity including stop spacing so that assets can be spread to ensure there is not an overconcentration of assets in a small area relative to demand;
- (e) The proximity of the stop to a patronage 'generator' eg: employment/education/shopping malls/key attractors and major destinations /CBD/community facility;
- (f) The expected growth forecasts for the stop;
- (g) Stops served by very few bus trips such as peak only bus services;
- (h) Bus stops where most passengers are disembarking only (eg: outbound stops nearer the end of the route);

- (i) Difficult stop locations with significant challenges to installation of assets such as lack of power, footpath space or other site specific challenges;
- (j) Locations where bus routes may be subject to review with the possibility of a stop being downgraded or discontinued; and
- (k) Bus stops served by routes or portions of routes that are not subject to delay such as outer termini – where, for example, RTI information would provide little passenger benefit over conventional timetable information.

7. Funding allocation 2014/15 onwards

There are two capital projects included in the draft LTP for bus stop assets which will help to meet the identified levels of services. These are:

1. New Bus shelters (developments)
2. Additional informational signage eg: totems (developments)

There are three main renewal efforts included in the draft LTP for bus stop assets:

1. Bus shelters (like for like renewals/replacements)
2. Major interchange renewal programme (project based):
 - (a) Porirua station (like for like renewal/replacement)
 - (b) Upper Hutt station
 - (c) Lyttleton Ave, Porirua
 - (d) Bunny Street, Lower Hutt
 - (e) Waterloo, Lower Hutt
3. Signage renewals

Table 1 summarises the funding allocations in the draft LTP for maintenance, renewals and developments of bus stop infrastructure. These figures are subject to agreement through the LTP consultation and AMP processes which are ongoing.

Project	2014/15	2015/16
Maintenance	\$1.4M	\$1.54M
Renewals	\$250,000	\$825,000
Developments	\$100,000	\$452,000

8. Communication

No public or media communication is required at this time.

TA's will be briefed on the policy and process at the first opportunity at regular infrastructure meetings with their officers.

9. Next steps

- (a) Officers will implement the operational policy for bus stop infrastructure
- (b) Officers will provide an update of the outcomes of the policy to the Strategy and Policy Committee in mid-2015.

10. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

10.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

This bus stop infrastructure policy outlines the policy and process used by Officers to prioritise bus stop asset spending at an operational level and is therefore of low significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

11. Recommendations

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Agree in principle the operational policy for bus stop infrastructure:*

GWRC will aim to manage the prioritisation of spending by:

- *closing the asset gaps by 2030**
- *ensuring, through prudent asset & data management, that there are no assets in poor or very poor condition by 2020*.*

(Subject to affordability and LTP & AMP processes)*

GWRC will provide efficient & effective bus stop infrastructure in the Region by:

- *Categorising bus stops in the Wellington region according to patronage, function and location*
- *Setting the levels of service for bus stop assets*
- *Assessing the asset gaps at bus stops*
- *Setting the criteria to be used when assessing bus stop spending*
- *Developing and using operational tools to prioritise closing the asset gaps over time*
- *Identifying stops for optimisation to free up funding*
- *Recording decisions made about assets expenditure to inform future decision making.*

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