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Report 01.551

25 July 2001

File: TP/6/1/2

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Report to the Passenger Transport Committee
By Tony Brennand, Manager, Transport Policy

Bus Priority: Wellington City

1. Purpose

To present to the Committee further attractive bus priority schemes for the Wellington CBD and to raise the issue of the limited progress by Wellington City Council in implementing bus priority schemes.

2. Background

For some years now it has been recognised that bus travel in Wellington City has become detrimentally impeded by other traffic. Recent Regional Land Transport Strategies have acknowledged that if bus travel is to be attractive in Wellington City then bus priority measures would need to be introduced.

Under policy 4.1.2 of the 1993-1998 Regional Land Transport Strategy the following statement is made,

“ A series of bus lanes, bus priority measures at signal controlled intersections and bus only streets will be developed in key locations. ”

In the discussion that follows Wellington City Council is identified as the key implementing agent.

Policy A3 of the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 1996-2001 states,

“ Develop bus priority measures. ”

The current Regional Land Transport Strategy 1999-2004 says in policy 1.1.4

“Enhance the quality, reliability and priority of public transport facilities and services.”

Also in the section on the Ngauranga to Wellington CBD corridor plan of the current Regional Land Transport Strategy,

“Bus services caught up in road congestion” is identified as an issue.

“Improve bus priority through CBD traffic” is identified as a project into the up to 2004 period.

Wellington City Council, Wellington Regional Council and Stagecoach Wellington Ltd are signatories to the Quality Partnership agreement 1998-2002. In section 6.2 *“Priority for Public Transport”* of the Quality Partnership agreement the following statement is made,

“Wellington City Council undertakes to institute measures, which will reduce average bus journey times over the term of this Quality Partnership and to monitor their effectiveness. This will mean the implementation of bus priority measures such as bus only lanes, traffic light pre-emption for buses and the construction of more in lane bus stops.”

3. Comment

Tim Kelly Transportation Planning Limited have produced a report *“Bus Priority Wellington CBD”*. A presentation of the findings of this report will be provided at the Committee meeting. In particular a number of worthwhile schemes have been identified that should be implemented.

A copy of the report’s conclusions and recommendations are provided in **Attachment 1**. A copy of a letter of support for the report’s findings from Stagecoach New Zealand Ltd is provided in **Attachment 2**.

The greatest concern with all these projects is the track record of Wellington City Council in implementing such worthwhile projects. Over several years many worthwhile bus priority and other projects have been generated that Wellington City Council has been unable to implement. These projects include the Karori bus lane proposal, the Manners Street bus lane proposal, the Lambton Quay bus lane extension and a selection of bus priority projects shown in **Attachment 3** which were presented to the Committee at its November 1999 meeting. Wellington City Council have not managed to implement any of these projects despite agreeing to and despite Wellington Regional Council offering to fund the local authority share of their cost.

This problem was the subject of a submission to the Wellington City Council’s Annual Plan 2001/02 written on behalf of Wellington Regional Council by Councillor McDavitt. A copy of this submission is provided in **Attachment 4**.

This submission suggested that the City Council's inability to implement bus priority measures is indicative of a wider problem of the City Council meeting its responsibilities as an implementing agency. Councillor McDavitt's conclusion is that there is "*a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of City Council performance in transport planning and public transport support in particular.*"

It is useful to consider the statutory obligations of Wellington City Council in respect to the Regional Land Transport Strategy given that successive Regional Land Transport Strategies have given strong and clear expression of the need to institute bus priority measures in Wellington City.

The relevant legislation is section 42H of the Transit New Zealand Act which deals with District Roding Programmes. Without compliance with this section it would be illegal for Transfund New Zealand to fund a District Roding Programme.

The most frequently cited is subsection (6),

" A district roding programme shall not be inconsistent with any national land transport strategy, or any relevant regional land transport strategy that is in force at the time of preparation of the programme."

Unless there is any conflict with a Regional Land Transport Strategy this requirement is reasonable easy to satisfy.

However sub sections (2)(d) and (7) of section 42 H put more onerous requirements on District Roding Programmes.

Sub section (2)(d) requires of a District Roding Programme,

"State how each output and capital project complies with the relevant regional land transport strategy."

and subsection (7) says,

"A district roding programme shall implement any regional land transport strategy having effect in respect of that district, unless the implementing of that strategy is clearly impracticable."

These subsections send strong signals of demonstrable compliance with the Regional Land Transport Strategy and a requirement to implement the strategy unless it is impracticable to do so.

In the case of the number of bus priority schemes that have not been implemented by Wellington City Council there appears to be no evidence that the schemes are clearly impracticable.

The Committee needs to consider the additional bus priority projects set out in the Tim Kelly proposals. If the Committee adopts these projects then it would be appropriate to seek their inclusion in Wellington City Councils' future district roding programmes. This might best be achieved through a meeting between officers of each Council. At that meeting the City Council would also be asked for some rational why existing bus priority projects are not being progressed. Any response would need to be reported to the Regional Land Transport Committee as that Committee has sought an

explanation of the limited introduction of bus priority measures in Wellington City. Unfortunately, continued lack of progress on these bus priority projects could test the meaning of section 42 H (7) of the Transport Act as failure to meet these requirements could invalidate the City's Roothing Programme which could mean Transfund New Zealand might not be permitted to fund the programme. This possibility needs to be raised with Transfund New Zealand and Wellington City Council officials. Wellington City might rightfully respond by declaring the projects impractical or seeking a change to the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

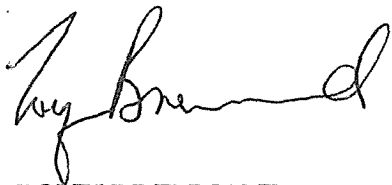
4. Communication

A press release could be issued expressing Wellington Regional Council's concern at the lack of progress by Wellington City Council in implementing bus priority measures as required by the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

5. Recommendation

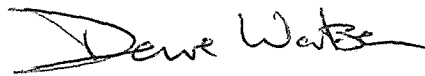
- (i) *That the Committee adopt the recommendations of the Tim Kelly report for additional bus priority measures in Wellington City;*
- (ii) *That the Committee recommend to Wellington City Council the implementation of these bus priority measures through their district roading programme to fulfil the policy objectives of the RLTS;*
- (iii) *That the Chairman of the Passenger Transport Committee raise the issue of lack of Progress in implementing bus priority measures with the chairman of the Wellington City Council Infrastructure Committee.*

Report prepared by:



TONY BRENNAND
Manager, Transport Policy

Approved for submission by:



DAVE WATSON
Divisional Manager, Transport

Attachment 1: Wellington CBD; Bus Priority Review

Attachment 2: Stagecoach New Zealand Bus Priorities, Wellington CBD

Attachment 3: New Projects for the Minor Passenger Transport Infrastructure List

Attachment 4: Submission on Wellington City Council Draft Annual Plan 2001/02

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

Buses in central Wellington are being subject to increasingly levels of delay and travel time variability due to rising volumes of general traffic and the number of bus vehicles operating through the area. Bus travel between Courtenay Place and the Railway Station, a journey timetabled as 10 – 15 minutes, may take up to 28 minutes in the evening peak period.

Uncertainty with respect to the arrival time of a bus service is cited by bus passengers as an important issue, and one which acts against the general objective of both city and regional councils to increase the patronage of public transport services.

Current initiatives to improve the reliability of bus service times are concentrated in areas on the edge of the central area, for example the Hutt Road and Chaytor Street, where there is little inconvenience to other road users and costs are low due to the availability of space. In contrast, bus priority measures in the critical central areas have generally not met funding requirements due to low or negative net benefits (when additional congestion to other road users is evaluated) and the lack of space for the provision of separate running lanes for buses.

A critical review of the operation of bus network in the central area has identified two isolated improvements, in the Hunter and Mercer Street areas, which would lead to some reductions in delays experienced by buses. Analysis has shown that these are feasible from both engineering and economic perspectives.

In the central area there is little scope for further measures which would have any significant impact on the movement of buses. More radical proposals to free the CBD area of extraneous traffic have not been advanced because of a fear of an adverse reaction from the public and the retail sector. It is now appropriate to determine the importance the community places upon accessibility for the private car to the central area, public transport services, pedestrian accessibility and levels of environmental amenity in order to give a mandate for change.

6.2 Recommendations

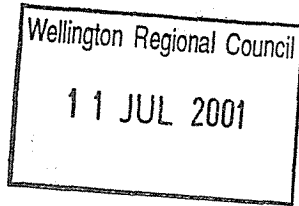
It is recommended that;

- the Lambton Quay / Featherston Street / Hunter Street improvement which has been evaluated should proceed to detailed design and implementation
- the Willis Street / Mercer Street improvement which has been evaluated should proceed to detailed design, subject to an assessment of the potential benefits arising from the application of localised bus pre-emption in this area

- the proposal for a southbound median bus lane on Thorndon Quay, identified in the BAH report, should now be investigated further in the light of more certainty with respect to the bus terminus layout and the movement of the Newlands/Mana buses
- the separate benefits associated with the provision of a separate bus phase at the Cuba Street pedestrian crossing on Dixon Street should be identified to determine if this project is worthwhile on its own
- the use of localised bus pre-emption on the Golden Mile using inductive loops should be investigated as a short term measure
- the introduction of full bus pre-emption on the Golden Mile using transponders fitted to buses should be taken forward to more detailed evaluation
- the available traffic modelling tools should be used to assess opportunities for the removal of extraneous traffic from the central area between Courtenay Place and Lambton Quay (co-ordinate with the 'aggressive' public transport scenarios to be evaluated as part of the current Wellington CBD Corridor Study)
- the criteria which are implicitly used to set traffic signal timings and which hence determine relative priorities within the CBD area should be reviewed and alternatives evaluated
- the costs and benefits associated with northbound bus running from the Courtenay Place / Taranaki Street intersection through Manners Mall should be assessed
- opportunities for a reduction in the number of bus vehicles running through the central area (whilst maintaining capacity) should be reviewed with bus operators
- a greater emphasis should be placed upon the 'intangible' benefits of bus priority projects; this will require work to identify and evaluate such benefits
- WCC and WRC should work more closely together to ensure the achievement of improved operating conditions for public transport; this may require a review of the current 'Quality Partnership Agreement' arrangement.

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6 July 2001



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Mr Tony Brennan
Manager, Transport Planning and Policy
Wellington Regional Council
P O Box 11646
WELLINGTON

Dear Tony

BUS PRIORITIES, WELLINGTON CBD

Thank you for the copy of the recent report which you commissioned from Tim Kelly Transportation Planning Limited.

Stagecoach is in full agreement with the recommendations contained in the Tim Kelly report. In particular, we are very keen that the proposals for the Lambton Quay/Hunter Street and Willis/Mercer Street intersections be proceeded with as soon as possible.

In addition to the recommendations contained in the report, we would like to suggest that urgent consideration be given to two other "micro" bus priority measures, which we believe would give significant advantages to bus users, without disadvantaging general traffic.

The proposed measures relate to the bus stops in Dixon Street by Cuba Mall and Manners Street by the Mid City cinema complex. At both these locations, buses have to move out of the bus stops into the right hand lane in order to make a right hand turn very shortly down stream. In making these movements, buses have to compete with general traffic and significant delays occur.

We suggest that consideration be given to specific measures designed to ease the egress of buses from these two stops into the respective right hand lanes.

Two options which we would like to put forward for consideration are:

- That the traffic signals at the Cuba Mall pedestrian crossing and the Manners/Willis Street intersection be modified so as to provide for a bus advance phase, which would give buses a 10 second head start on other traffic. Such measures have been in place in Symonds Street in Auckland for some time now and are spectacularly successful in speeding the movement of buses.
- Alternatively, that both bus stops be relocated onto island platforms in the centre of Dixon Street and Manners Street respectively. The right hand lane in each case would

become an exclusive bus only lane, whilst general traffic would have free reign in the left hand lane.

We see these options being relatively low cost measures which have the potential to provide significant benefits to bus users. It is worth noting that the increase in north bound bus journey times over the last few years has been significantly greater than the increase in south bound bus journey times. It is our belief that most of the delay occurs in the Dixon Street/Manners Street area.

Stagecoach would be very grateful for whatever you can do to expedite the resolution of these two issues and to ensure the implementation of the recommendations in the Tim Kelly report.

I have sent similar letters to Cr. Ian Hutchings and Steve Harte at WCC and Cr. Terry McDavitt at WRC.

Yours sincerely



Ian Turner
Commercial Director



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Attachment To Report ³ 07.551
Page 1 of 2

Report 99.666

16 November 1999

File: T/8/1/2

[99.666.awb]

Report to the Passenger Transport Committee
By Tony Brennand, Manager Transport Policy

New Projects for the Minor Passenger Transport Infrastructure List

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about new minor passenger transport infrastructure projects and have them added to the Minor Projects Priority List.

2. Background

Minor passenger transport infrastructure projects have been prioritised by the Committee as shown in Attachment A. As information on new projects becomes available these projects are prioritised and added to the list. As funding becomes available projects are undertaken in priority order and removed from the list.

3. Comment

3.1 Bus Priority

Booz Allen and Hamilton Limited have identified several low cost high return bus priority schemes. These are:

| Location | Direction | Description | Time Period | Capital Cost (\$000) | BC Ratio |
|------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Kaiwharawhara | SBD | Kerbside bus lane plus right turn for buses only | AM peak | 7 | 40 |
| Hutt Rd- Kaiwharawhara | SBD | Kerbside bus lane to traffic signals | AM peak | 11 | 28 |
| Hutt Rd-Sar St | SBD | Kerbside bus lane to Tinakori Rd plus clearway | AM peak | 6.5 | 53 |
| Thorndon Quay | SBD | Median bus lane to Mulgrave St | AM peak | 6.5 | 11 |
| Adelaide Rd | NBD | Bus lane prior to Basin Reserve | AM peak | 8.5 | 67 |

These projects can be prioritised on the basis of their B/C ratio.

These projects are to be included in the Wellington District Road Programme and are likely to attract Transfund New Zealand financial assistance. It has been Council's practice to fund the local authority share.

3.2 Bus Park and Ride

A number of criteria have been developed by Booz Allen and Hamilton Limited to select promising bus park and ride sites. These criteria include the site having:

- A higher frequency service
- An express bus service
- a large catchment area
- land available on or near the bus route
- a location just inside a fare boundary

Wellington City sites were investigated and prioritised as follows:

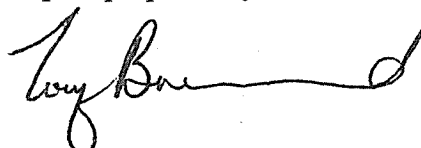
| Location | Estimated Carpark Required | Capital Cost (\$000) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Dover Street | 25 | 95 |
| Rongotai Road median | 15 | 29 |
| North Wellington AFC | 10 | 10 |
| Devonshire Street | 15 | 38 |
| Karori Write Price | 10 | 1.5 |
| Wellington Show Buildings | 10 | 24 |
| Hapua Street – town belt | 15 | 54 |
| Cobham Drive – prior Miramar Cutting | 20 | 81 |

It is unlikely that any of these projects would have sufficient economic benefits to attract Transfund New Zealand financial assistance as an ATR. These projects generally exist on routes with less congestion than the railway park and ride sites. Their relative high cost per space would also make them less attractive than railway park and ride projects.

4. Recommendation

That the bus priority and park and ride schemes discussed in this report be added to the minor projects priority list as shown in Attachment B.

Report prepared by:



TONY BRENNAND
Manager, Transport Policy

Approved for submission by:



DAVE WATSON
Divisional Manager, Transport

Attachments : 2

File No. TP/3/3/2
WCC AP_tmd

16 May 2001

Chief Executive Officer
Wellington City Council
P O Box 2199
WELLINGTON

Dear Sir

Submission on Wellington City Council Draft Annual Plan 2001/02

The Passenger Transport Committee of the Wellington Regional Council resolved to forward a submission on your draft Annual Plan at its last meeting. This submission therefore addresses only transport planning issues, pp 161-181.

The Wellington Central area is the heart of the region economically, socially and culturally. Access to it and around it is a matter of regional significance. In recent years we note there has been a declining level of service for motorists, public transport and pedestrians. This decline in service is mainly caused by increasing demand for access, in itself an indicator of positive achievement elsewhere, not being matched by increases in capacity. The result is that users experience increasing delays. Where services (eg. bus services) have been increased, patrons experience more congestion and delay on your inner-city streets than the arterial roads. Bus operators advise us that inner city congestion is now causing significant timetable slippage, especially in the evening peak. In summary, your transport infrastructure planning is not keeping pace with your city development, continuance of this situation must eventually undermine city development itself.

Transport Planning Resources

We feel that over recent years the City Council has not put resources into transport planning commensurate with its role as manager of the street network in the region's major destination. The Regional Council therefore appreciates that the City Council is now further developing its City Transport Strategy, and is working with us in developing a Wellington Central Corridor Plan.

We are aware your consultants Parsons Brinkerhoff advised you to take a more active interest in regional transport matters, in particular, regional urban growth strategies. Regardless of regional transport issues outside Wellington City, we foresee needs over the next 10 years, needs to examine the city's own southern, eastern, western and northern corridors more closely because of increasing (and changing) user demand versus limited infrastructure supply and wonder whether your 10 year financial strategy adequately reflects the resources that will be required for these tasks.

As an example, section 42I of the Transit New Zealand Act requires a territorial local authority to 'consult' with the Regional Council over its annual District Roding Programme. Our interpretation of this has been that the territorial local authority sends a written copy of its DRP to the Regional Council for comment. Other territorial local authority's in the region have no difficulty meeting this existing requirement but Wellington City Council has had difficulty in recent years. A Council that has difficulty meeting existing requirements is not well placed to service new tasks.

Bus Priority Measures

We note that City Council publications frequently highlight that "supporting the public transport network is a major commitment for the Council" (p 179 of DAP). We therefore look at your DAP with interest to see how this is translated into action and intention. We find that you will make a net gain from your bus shelter activity (advertising income) of \$272,000 (p 179) of which you will be contributing \$25,000 to other shelter maintenance. This does not convince as "a major commitment". Can we suggest that it would now be appropriate to expedite the major, medium and minor bus priority projects already jointly identified, but not yet progressed:

| | |
|--------|--|
| Minor | Hutt Road, Kaiwharawhara Road |
| Medium | Karori (Chaytor Street end), Newtown (Adelaide Road) |
| Major | Manners/Dixon Street |

As costs for these projects would be borne by the regional ratepayer and Transfund these are not financial commitments to the City Council, but we acknowledge that they are commitments to you as road controlling authority. Planning for the Manners/Dixon project should be progressed now because:

- (a) there is a present need (seen in inner city bus congestion) and
- (b) construction of the Inner City Bypass will provide an answer for the main impediment, lack of alternative capacity for arterial motorists.

A time restricted (to evening peak) bus priority lane should accommodate the expected retailer resistance. Given that these projects take 1-2 years to plan, consult on and design, the first stages should be begun this financial year.

Pedestrian Network

A pedestrian-friendly environment in the inner city should be a priority. While recognising Council's amenity, shelter and kerb extension work, we believe there is room to improve pedestrian measures for the specially significant inner city pedestrian; there seems to be no recognition in the 10- Year Plan that the Inner City Bypass provides both opportunity and need for pedestrian improvements through Te Aro – another example of a lack of transport planning.

Significant improvements can be achieved without great financial cost – pedestrian delay (at intersections, from unfriendly traffic signal timings) is a known, measured discomfort factor for commuting pedestrians. Our current signal timings are set to favour the motorist and penalise the pedestrian even in inner city streets to and from the railway station. This is at least inequitable and can be corrected cheaply. (The major cost is to the motorist, but recall that these are inner city streets, close to the railway station, so the priority being given to the motorist is questionable at these sites).

Conclusion

Our conclusion is that there is a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of City Council performance in transport planning and public transport support in particular. The Draft Annual Plan goes only part-way towards addressing that gap, more worryingly there appears to be little change in the balance of the 10-Year Strategy.

Yours sincerely

TERRY McDAVITT
Chair, Regional Land Transport Committee

