

Wellington Public Transport Review

Terms of Reference

Introduction

This document sets out the terms of reference for the Wellington Public Transport Review, to be conducted by Greater Wellington Regional Council between 2008 and 2011.

Background

Greater Wellington has an ongoing programme for area-wide reviews, in accordance with policies laid out in the *Regional Passenger Transport Plan*, which require that all scheduled passenger transport services be reviewed at least once every five years, to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the community and reflect any changes such as shifts in demand (Policy 1.5).

Area-wide reviews provide an opportunity to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of the passenger transport network by allowing consideration of the interaction between all public transport services within a larger geographical area.

The last comprehensive area-wide review of Wellington City services was undertaken in the early 1990s, although a number of service-level reviews have been undertaken since that time. The lack of subsequent area-wide reviews appears to be related to a previous belief that reviews were not necessary due to the fixed nature of the trolley bus network. This stance has changed, given the increasing emphasis on integrated network planning, increases in trolley capacity gained from the new trolley buses, the expansion of the diesel bus network, and the significant growth that the city has experienced in recent years and expects in future years.

Objectives

The primary objective of the review is to improve value for money by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the public transport network within the study area. Other objectives include improved reliability, coverage, connections, access, and service levels, and ensuring that capacity is matched to demand.

Key principles for review include:

- A strategic approach – the wider context will be considered before detailed design is undertaken.
- An integrated approach – all related initiatives, activities and modes will be considered (e.g. real time information, improvements to the Golden Mile).

- Stakeholder and community engagement – operators and the community will be engaged to help identify issues and test options. Greater Wellington will work with Wellington City Council and operators to implement the resulting service changes.

Scope

The review will encompass the urban areas of Wellington City, south of Takapu Rd in Granada North. Tawa and Granada North are considered as part of the Porirua area-wide reviews, and have been recently reviewed.

The review will consider all public transport services in the study area. Its particular focus will be those services provided by regular and purpose-specific bus services, including trolley bus, diesel bus and school bus. It will also consider how these integrate and interconnect with rail services (particularly the Johnsonville railway line), harbour ferry services within Wellington, and the cable car. It will concentrate on operational improvements to the existing network, and will look to achieve these within existing public transport expenditure.

The current review is being undertaken on the basis that:

- There is an operative 10-year trolley bus contract.
- Rail services will continue to operate on the Johnsonville Line.
- Rail will not be extended south of its current terminus.

The review will not consider:

- Light rail and other similar improvements. The *Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan* requires Greater Wellington to undertake a feasibility study for a high quality public transport system, including light rail, in 2011/12, and to produce a detailed scheme assessment of the most favourable option(s) after 2013/14. The changes that result from the current review will look to strengthen key corridors and will not preclude further improvements that may result from these studies.
- Rail services or bus services that primarily serve catchments outside the study area.
- Fares and fare zones. However, consideration will be given to simple ticketing improvements that might improve the operational efficiency of the study area network.

The review has a medium term perspective. The resulting service changes will be implemented in conjunction with the introduction of the new long-term diesel bus contracts that result from the recent Procurement Strategy. They will therefore have a twelve year focus – although there will be an opportunity to review services after eight years (and more regularly if required).

The review will implement the current policies laid out by the *Regional Land Transport Strategy*, *Regional Passenger Transport Plan*, *Passenger Transport Operational Plan*, and the *Ngauranga to Wellington Airport Corridor Plan*, as they pertain to public transport services in the study area.

Other initiatives to be considered include: real time information; integrated ticketing; the Central Area Bus Operational Review; Wellington City Council plans such as *Golden Mile Development Plan*, *Wellington City Bus Priority Plan*, and urban development and growth plans; and operator bus fleet upgrades.

Process

The project will be broken into six key stages: Preliminary, Initial Consultation, Initial Design, Final Consultation, Final Design and Implementation. A proposed timeframe is provided in the following section.

A description of the tasks associated with the key stages follows:

1. Preliminary Stage: Will entail project planning and initial discussions with the public transport operators and Wellington City Council.
2. Initial Consultation: Will consist of three major components: public consultation, consultation with key stakeholders, and market research. The findings of these will be used to guide the subsequent Initial Design stage. They will involve the following:
 - Public consultation: Consultation with individuals via the delivery of a consultation document to all households within the study area. This will inform households about the review and its timelines, and give them with the opportunity to provide feedback on issues and ideas for improvement.
 - Consultation with key stakeholders: This will consist of:
 - Direct consultation with:
 - Wellington City Council (face to face consultation)
 - Public transport operators (face to face consultation)
 - Iwi (face to face consultation)
 - Residents' and progressive associations (by letter and hearing)
 - High schools (by letter)
 - Major organisations with a likely public transport interest (e.g. Capital and Coast District Health Board, the universities, and Wellington Airport) (face to face consultation)
 - Any other organisations that Wellington City Council considers should be consulted as a key stakeholder.
 - Workshops with:
 - Representatives of disability groups
 - User representatives (individuals that make regular submissions on public transport issues)
 - Bus drivers (to be confirmed with the bus operators).

- Market research: Will be used to validate the findings of the public consultation process and probe user preferences on various network design trade-offs (e.g. increased transfers verses lower frequencies).
3. Initial Design: Will begin with strategic planning to support the development of a regional Integrated Public Transport Network Framework¹ and set the parameters around which the subsequent option design can be undertaken. Focus groups will be used to identify the aspects that the public most like and dislike. A set of network options will then be developed for consultation with the public.
 4. Final Consultation: The community will be presented with options for suggested changes to the public transport network, using a similar approach to that used for the initial public consultation. The study area will be divided into three or four geographical areas for this process, to enable individuals to focus on the proposals as they apply to their local area. This stage will consist of consultation with households, a workshop with user representatives, and direct consultation with key stakeholders via the reference group (see below). The findings of this process will be used to guide the subsequent Final Design stage.
 5. Final Design: The preferred option will be identified and detailed network design work undertaken to produce working public transport timetables. Aspects of the new network will be tested using focus groups to ensure that the changes have public acceptance.
 6. Implementation: It is expected that implementation will be staged based on the geographical area of the new contracts. A major information campaign will need to be put in place by Metlink to support this. Services will be monitored closely following implementation, to ensure that they are running successfully. Any significant problems will be addressed as identified.

Wellington City Council and the public transport operators will be involved and consulted throughout the process. Greater Wellington will set up a reference group, which will include Wellington City Council and the major operators, to guide the study and ensure that major stakeholders are informed of major developments. The Reference Group will meet on a regular basis, most likely on a bi-monthly frequency, and as required at major milestones.

Data requirements

The outcome of the review is particularly dependent on the cooperation of the public transport operators, who will be asked to supply detailed boardings and journey data. Any data supplied will be treated as highly confidential, and will not be publicly released without the permission of the operator concerned.

Timeframe

The following timeline is proposed for the review.

¹ The Integrated Public Transport Network Framework will provide for the delivery of an integrated public transport system, defining a network hierarchy to guide the design and development of the public transport network. The IPTNF will also identify the role and function of all routes and modes (i.e. rail, bus, ferry) within this integrated network hierarchy.

The primary constraint relates to the implementation of the new diesel bus contracts, which is expected in October 2011. To meet this timetable, the review will need to be essentially complete twelve months prior to that date. All tasks and stages are based on this constraint.

Stage	Key tasks	Indicative dates
Preliminary	Preliminary tasks	May - June 2009
Initial consultation	Public consultation	June - August 2009
	Consultation with key stakeholders	September - October 2009
	Market research	September - October 2009
Initial design	Strategic planning	October - December 2009
	Focus groups	November - December 2009
	Option design	December 2009 - March 2010
Final consultation	Public consultation	April - June 2010
	Consultation with key stakeholders	June 2010
Final design	Detailed network design	June - September 2010
	Focus groups	August - September 2010
	Confirm network	October 2010
Implementation	Implementation with new contracts	October 2011 ²

Deliverables

The review will be led by Greater Wellington. Key milestones will be reported to the Transport & Access Committee. An update memo will be distributed to all Councillors in line with the Reference Group meetings. Stakeholders will be updated via the Reference Group.

The review will be considered to be complete once changes are implemented. Ongoing monitoring will continue beyond that point, but will not be considered to be part of the current review.

² Indicative only – the implementation timeline is subject to the current regional tendering process.