



Report 09.739
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Committee Transport & Access Committee
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Update on Naenae Subway

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on graffiti vandalism of Naenae subway (Subway) following its upgrade in April 2009 and to seek approval for further improvements.

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

After a number of fairly high profile crimes in the Subway both Greater Wellington and Hutt City Council decided that the Subway required upgrading. During the Easter 2009 weekend Naenae subway was closed for 3 days to pedestrian foot traffic from Cambridge Terrace to Oxford Terrace in order to make some much needed improvements. These improvements were seen as an interim solution (excluding the installation of CCTV).

Improvements included:

• Cleaning of Subway walls and ceiling (ice-blasting)	\$50,350
• Subway painting of walls and ceilings (materials only)	\$22,000
• Boarding of the stair entrapment zones	\$9,000
• Improved Subway lighting (prison proof casings)	\$12,000
• CCTV installation platform and Subway areas	\$53,928
Total	\$147,278

Greater Wellington allocated a total sum of \$89,000 towards this project with Hutt City Council contributing the remaining amount.

From this work closer ties were forged with the Department of Corrections (Department) and since April 2009 the Department has been painting out tagging in the Subway on a weekly basis.

4. Current Situation

All wilful damage incidents captured on CCTV are forwarded to Naenae Community Police from Greater Wellington. Each tagging offence captured on camera takes around 30-60 minutes to process. The cameras are checked each morning for fresh tags and there are generally 1-5 fresh tags captured by CCTV at Naenae each week (many more incidents go un-recorded). An incident form for each tag is faxed to the Police crime desk and assigned a crime number. All images are saved centrally at Greater Wellington and then sent to various groups such as the Park & Ride security company Provision and the Hutt Police Graffiti Database.

Recent results with CCTV have seen offenders caught for tagging in Naenae subway:

- On 25/04/09 a young male was caught tagging the subway walls. He is required to complete a 10 hours graffiti removal in the Naenae area and has written a letter of apology to HCC and Tranz Metro.
- On 08/05/09 a sixteen year old male was caught tagging the mural in subway. He has completed 12 hours of 'Community Payback'.
- On 25/06/09 a thirteen year old girl was caught tagging one of the subway CCTV cameras; Youth Aid has been involved.

As noted above, Greater Wellington uses the Department to paint out tagging in the worst hit subways. The labour is free however Greater Wellington pays for the materials. To date Greater Wellington is spending around \$43,000 on painting materials alone (year-to-date 2009/10).

Each time a camera is tagged it costs \$75 to have the tag removed. If this is not done quickly the camera is rendered useless.

Security company Provision are currently patrolling Epuni and Naenae subways on a rotational basis at school in and out times in a bid to curb school children tagging (the main cause of opportunistic tagging.) These extra patrols cost \$110 per week.

Menzshed were a consideration for providing extra patrols in the Subway, however the health and safety implications outweigh the benefits. Naenae Community Patrol may be able to offer some additional support though their patrols tend to be car based.

5. Further initiatives

5.1 Security

As mentioned earlier Greater Wellington has increased the number of security patrols at both Epuni and Naenae Subways, with the focus of the patrols at school in/out times in an attempt to control tagging by schoolchildren.

Greater Wellington officers are exploring an option for a Facebook (the world's largest online social network) page run by Lower Hutt Police aimed at increasing identification of tagging offenders. Offenders' images would be uploaded with a brief description of the offence. Similar initiatives are currently successfully working in Queenstown, Manchester and New York.



Talks with Lower Hutt Police are also underway for monitoring of the CCTV to be included in their control centre. Options for audio surveillance are also being reviewed for the Subway to complement the existing CCTV system. This project would allow authorised personnel to speak directly to taggers to warn them off. Early indications suggest that this device would cost around \$10,000 for a one camera installation and this type of device has not been proven to be highly effective.

Other community based options include:

- Involving local shop owners and encouraging them not to sell marker pens to school children
- Schools confiscating marker pens on school premises

5.2 Education programmes

Hutt City Council has been running the Art 4 Change programme since 1996. It is a partner based scheme with various projects often organised with the help

of local community groups and schools. The programme aims are to educate children about graffiti and vandalism, pride and responsibility.

All courses provide:

- Workshops on art skills
- Supervised street art projects
- Other positive youth orientated activities such as dance

The Art 4 Change programme currently has \$10,000 allocated for education programmes. If Greater Wellington could match this it would considerably enhance the work already being done in the Hutt Valley.

It is generally considered that this method of educational programme is far more effective than organised Police visits to schools.

5.3 Further improvements to the Subway environment

(a) Graffiti Guard paint

After application of Graffiti Guard paint graffiti wipes off with a cloth and soapy water, however the paint is very expensive (\$85 per litre). In the long run it will reduce the materials cost, as mentioned above, for Greater Wellington.

To paint two coats of Graffiti Guard on the Subway would cost approximately \$15,000. One additional problem Greater Wellington faces is having a graffiti free surface to paint the Graffiti Guard onto. It is very rare for a freshly painted subway surface to be graffiti free the next day. Unfortunately the paint surface below must be left for 48 hours to dry properly before the Graffiti Guard can be applied. When painting the complete Subway two security guards are required (one at each end of the subway) throughout the duration of the works. Security would be required for at least 48 hours to provide adequate protection during paint drying. The cost for this protection over 48 hours is \$2,125.

Total cost of Graffiti Guarding the Subway, \$17,125.

(b) Murals

Research has shown that taggers tend not to tag where other local artists have painted murals. The key to success in controlling tagging is to involve the taggers constructively. Collective 'buy-in' from local taggers and affiliated friends is imperative in order for Greater Wellington to ensure that the any mural that was installed has meaning and credibility for the disenfranchised members of the Naenae community. Only by ensuring this will any future murals stand any chance of being left alone. The use of a mural board rather than a mural painted directly onto the wall is cheaper and has better

environmental benefits. Each board could be placed on either side of the Subway entrances to collect more natural light and to reflect the overhead lights at night. Due to the shiny surface of the boards light reflection would negate any use of darker colour (which is important to deter tagging.)

The intention is to show a diverse cultural blend of cultures present in Naenae; images mixed together from Maori, Samoan, Tongan and modern style street art. This would be a great opportunity to engage local school kids and graffiti artists to produce a collage effect of images which would then be screen printed on to the laminate anti graffiti/scratch boards. Four boards of 1.5m x 3.6m would be required and these would be screwed to the Subway walls and finished with a neat bead of black sealant around the edges to stop the boards from being broken or ripped.

This option is far cheaper than commissioning an artist to paint the Subway, furthermore no extra costly security would be required to guard the mural during the works.

Total costs of mural boards approximately \$10,000.

(c) Discussion

It is recommended that should the above work go ahead the floor of the Subway also be tar sealed. The current surface is covered in tagging and the surface is in a poor condition (potential tripping hazards)

Approximate cost of new tar seal, \$25,000

Total cost of the further improvements is approximately \$52,125, but would create a safer community based environment. Currently this work is not budgeted for in 2009/10. However Greater Wellington officers will look to see if there are any savings that can be made elsewhere in the Public Transport budget to cover some of this cost, and also approach Hutt City Council for a contribution to the works. Should Committee wish to proceed with the improvements then it needs to be aware that there could be a potential overspend against budget for 2009/10.

However due to the current condition of the Naenae Station buildings and platform, which the Subway links to, Greater Wellington officers would recommend that none of the above further improvements occur prior to an ONTRACK decision on the upgrading of the station. We believe in order to reduce the level of vandalism and graffiti the area of the whole environment needs to be improved. This has been demonstrated at Eponi Station where the level of vandalism has fallen following the removal of the old station building and the installation of new shelters, lights and subway upgrades. ONTRACK has been

consulting with the Naenae community on the matter of a potential station upgrade and Greater Wellington is awaiting the decision.

6. Communication

Greater Wellington officers will continue to work with Hutt City Council, the Police and local community groups regarding vandalism and graffiti in Naenae. Once a decision is made regarding further upgrade works to the Subway a media release will be prepared and local community groups will also be informed.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.
3. **Acknowledges** the need for further improvements to be undertaken at Naenae subway in order to reduce vandalism and graffiti, and to improve the environment of the subway.
3. **Approves** further improvements to the Naenae subway to a maximum expenditure of \$55,000, subject to:
 - *ONTRACK's decision regarding the upgrade of Naenae rail station*
 - *the minimisation of any budget overspends by achieving savings from other areas of the Public Transport budget 2009/10.*
4. **Approves** officers seeking a financial contribution from Hutt City Council for the further improvements to Naenae subway.

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