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Report to the Passenger Transport Committee
From Dr D J Watson, Division Manager Transport

Progress on Implementing the Public Transport Projects of the RLTS – December 2001

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of progress implementing the public transport projects of the RLTS.

To propose that the Passenger Transport Committee report to the next RLTC on its progress in implementing the RLTS.

2. Background

The RLTS is the Region's land transport strategy and is adopted by the Council. The Passenger Transport Committee is tasked with implementing the strategy commensurate with the financial constraints set down in the Council's long term Financial Strategy.

Attachment 1 is an example of an RLTS, Public Transport Progress Report presented to the RLTC in the last triennium. The remainder of this current report follows that example and is an update on progress.

3. Report on the progress made by the Public Transport Committee of the Wellington Regional Council in implementing the Public Transport Projects of the Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 1999-2004

(a) Western Corridor (Otaki to Wellington)

Public Transport Projects to 2004

– *Upgrade the Paraparaumu railway station building*

- *Build a new railway station at Raumati*
- *Extend the urban electric rail service to Waikanae*
- *Increase weekday urban rail service frequency from the Kapiti Coast to Wellington to 15 minutes in peak period and 30 minutes in off peak*
- *Provide additional commuter car and cycle parks at major railway stations*
- *Increase rail feeder services to match the increase in urban rail frequency*

The projects that require capital investment and hence could only be funded through a medium to long term service agreement remain stalled. These projects are:

- Upgrade of Paraparaumu railway station
- New station at Raumati
- Electrification to Waikanae

The current rail provider, Tranz Rail Limited, announced their intention to sell their Tranz Metro Wellington business this time last year between the Regional Council and the rail operator does not allow for future capital investments. The Council has embarked on a process that will lead to it together with a joint venture partner purchasing the Tranz Metro Wellington business, setting up a Wellington Rail Company to operate the Wellington regional rail network and the Council through a long term funding agreement purchasing on an ongoing basis services and facilities from the company. The Council is endeavouring to have a purchase proposal on the table by mid 2002.

Not until that date will it be possible to plan for the funding, construction and operation of the projects currently stalled. Resolving the ownership of Tranz Metro Wellington is fundamental to the future of passenger transport in the region. Some key decisions on future rolling stock are needed in the next 12 to 18 months.

The second group of projects listed have all been implemented:

- A new set of peak and off peak rail services that generally fulfil the strategy's requirement were introduced on 5 August.
- Paraparaumu, Porirua and Redwood carparks have been extended, with even more spaces yet to come at Paraparaumu. Detailed design work is underway to extend the Tawa station carpark.
- All bus services connecting with the trains have been rescheduled to coincide with the 5 August rail timetable changes. Bus services on the Kapiti Coast have been materially increased with most routes now provided more direct links to Paraparaumu station and connecting with the increase rail frequency, in both peak and off-peak.

(b) Eastern Corridor (Masterton to Wellington)***Public Transport Projects to 2004***

- *Investigate the construction of a bus or high occupancy vehicle lane which does not compromise the use of cycles on the route from Petone to Ngauranga on State Highway 2*
- *Allow additional direct commercial bus services from Wainuiomata, Stokes Valley, Western Hills and northern Upper Hutt to Wellington CBD*
- *Allow additional direct commercial ferry services across Wellington harbour*
- *Increase peak hour rail services to a 20 minute frequency from Upper Hutt*
- *Increase rail feeder bus services to match the increase in urban rail frequency*
- *Provide additional commuter carparks at main railway stations*
- *Refurbish Upper Hutt railway station and Petone railway station*
- *Continuous improvement in the quality and accessibility of passenger rail services on the Upper Hutt – Masterton route including improving commuter train frequency*

Urban rail services were increased and the necessary feeder bus services rescheduled on 5 August 2001. An additional Masterton peak period rail service to and from Wellington has been under investigation for some months. The purchase of Tranz Scenic services and most of the Tranz Rail carriage stock by West Coast Rail has led to a shortage of suitable carriages for this new service. Tranz Metro Wellington have obtained one additional carriage but this needs substantial refurbishment. The proposed new service therefore appears to be some time away.

No ferry or bus operator has sought to register any commercial ferry or bus service into the Wellington CBD from the Hutt Valley area.

Additional carpark spaces have been provided at many rail stations along the corridor. These include Waterloo, Petone, Trentham, Wallaceville, Upper Hutt and Featherston.

Investigation of a bus lane between Petone and Ngauranga on State Highway 2 is being undertaken as part of the Hutt Corridor study.

No progress can currently be made on the refurbishment of Upper Hutt and Petone railway stations pending the purchase of Tranz Metro Wellington.

(c) Porirua to Hutt Valley Corridor***Public Transport Projects to 2004***

- *New bus service Porirua to Lower Hutt*

A bus service linking Porirua and Upper Hutt started in August 2001 for a two year trial period. A Porirua, Johnsonville, Ngauranga Gorge, Lower Hutt service has been accepted as a Transfund New Zealand kick start project and will be implemented early next year, also for a two year trial period.

(d) **Wellington and Wellington CBD Corridors**

Public Transport Projects to 2004

- *Improve bus priority through CBD traffic*
- *Establish bus priority for Newtown buses serving the southern and eastern suburbs*
- *Provide a bus service to the airport from the CBD*
- *Construct a bus service to the airport from the CBD*
- *Construct bus and high occupancy vehicle priority measures through Karori down to the Karori tunnel*
- *Enhance the bus/rail interchange at Wellington station*
- *Improve pedestrian linkages from Wellington station to the CBD*

Wellington City has announced the construction of four bus lanes at Chaytor Street, Hutt Road, Kaiwharawhara and Adelaide Road. Public consultation on these projects is underway and unless they attract major opposition should be implemented early next year.

A number of bus lanes and priority measures within Wellington CBD have been brought to the attention of Wellington City Council and are being investigated. Construction of the Inner City Bypass, which might start by March 2002, will change the road capacity requirements of some inner city streets and hence enable bus only projects to be progressed with less overall disbenefit to other road users.

Stagecoach introduced a bus service from the Lower Hutt Valley to the Wellington Airport, marketed as the Flyer. Subsequently, because of insufficient daily patronage the Council had to tender some of the service that Stagecoach deregistered. This tender was, however, won by Stagecoach so the Flyer brand remains.

The Lambton Bus/Rail Interchange was started but is currently stalled until the funding issues have been resolved. The full project provides improved pedestrian access from the CBD to the bus and rail terminals.

4. Summary

The Tranz Metro Wellington situation has delayed a number of capital projects related to rail services. Without this nearly all the projects set out in the RLTS would have been completed or underway. The Tranz Metro sale needs to be resolved quickly or the long term future of rail in the region is at risk and hence the land transport strategy would need to be reviewed.

5. Communications

The community needs to understand that early construction of Transmission Gully depends on the completion of the urban rail improvements to the Kapiti Coast and that this is dependent on the Council purchasing Tranz Metro Wellington.

6. Recommendations

1. *That the report be received.*
2. *That the report, updated if necessary, be forwarded to the RLTC as the Passenger Transport Committee's progress report on the implementation of the RLTS.*

DAVE WATSON
Divisional Manager, Transport

Attachment:

- 1. RLTS Public Transport Progress Report**