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Committee Strategy and Policy Committee
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Hutt Valley Public Transport Review- Progress Update

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on the progress of the Hutt Valley Public Transport Review project and detail the next steps.

2. Background

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has an ongoing programme for area-wide public transport service reviews; the policies that underpin the programme are contained within the Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan 2011-2021 (RPTP)¹. The RPTP requires regular service reviews to be carried out to ensure public transport services operate effectively and efficiently as part of an integrated public transport network. Regular service reviews provide an opportunity to consider the extent to which public transport services meet customer demand. Key considerations when undertaking service reviews are to ensure value for money and to balance service levels with demand.

The last comprehensive area-wide review of public transport services in the Hutt Valley was undertaken in 2002. Prior to 2002 the focus of Hutt Valley bus services was on feeding train services. The outcome of the 2002 review introduced a new bus route network which resulted in more buses more often between the key attractions of the Hutt Valley. These were complemented by local community services which ensured more residents had access to a local bus service.

Over the years since the 2002 review there have been a number of minor changes to the public transport services in the Hutt Valley, some of these as a result of targeted service reviews.

¹ Currently a review of the RPTP is being undertaken and at time of writing this Report the RPTP was in draft format and public consultation was being undertaken.

The current services in the Hutt Valley have resulted in a bus and rail network which at a macro level would appear to serve the community well and meet demand. However it is essential that we proactively manage the network to ensure we meet the on-going changes in demand and needs.

This Hutt Valley Public Transport Review aims to deliver a bus and rail network which meets the needs of the community and grows public transport usage by being an attractive alternative to the private car, whilst being sustainable to the ratepayer.

3. Project Timeline

The project is progressing as per the timeline and should be completed by the scheduled dates. This report contains an update on the initial feedback from customer surveys as well as feedback from stakeholders. There is continued work to be completed in regard to patronage analysis as well as the travel habits of customers which are scheduled to be undertaken in July.

The table below details the project timeline and milestones completed.

Milestone	Date	Status
1. Project Plan formulated and project commenced	February 2014	Completed
2. Bus and Rail data collection undertaken in the form of customer surveys, operator meetings, and customer feedback	April 2014	Completed
3. Bus and Rail survey data and other feedback analysed Bus Rail	May 2014 June 2014	Completed
4. Bus and Rail patronage data analysed Options Report	July 2014 August 2014	
5. Consultation round 2	September/October 2014	
6. Final Recommendations	November 2014	

It is important to note that operational changes resulting from the final recommendations are likely to be implemented with new rail operating contract in 2016 and new bus operating contracts throughout 2017. It may however be possible to implement some changes prior to the introduction of the new contracts and these will be considered by officers when the final recommendations from this project are published.

4. Customer Satisfaction Surveys

During late April and early May a team of surveyors went on board bus and rail services in the Hutt Valley. The purpose of this was to survey current users of services to gain their views on the public transport services. Surveying took place over eight working days between the hours of 6.30am to 11.30am. A copy of the survey forms for bus and rail is attached in Attachment 1.

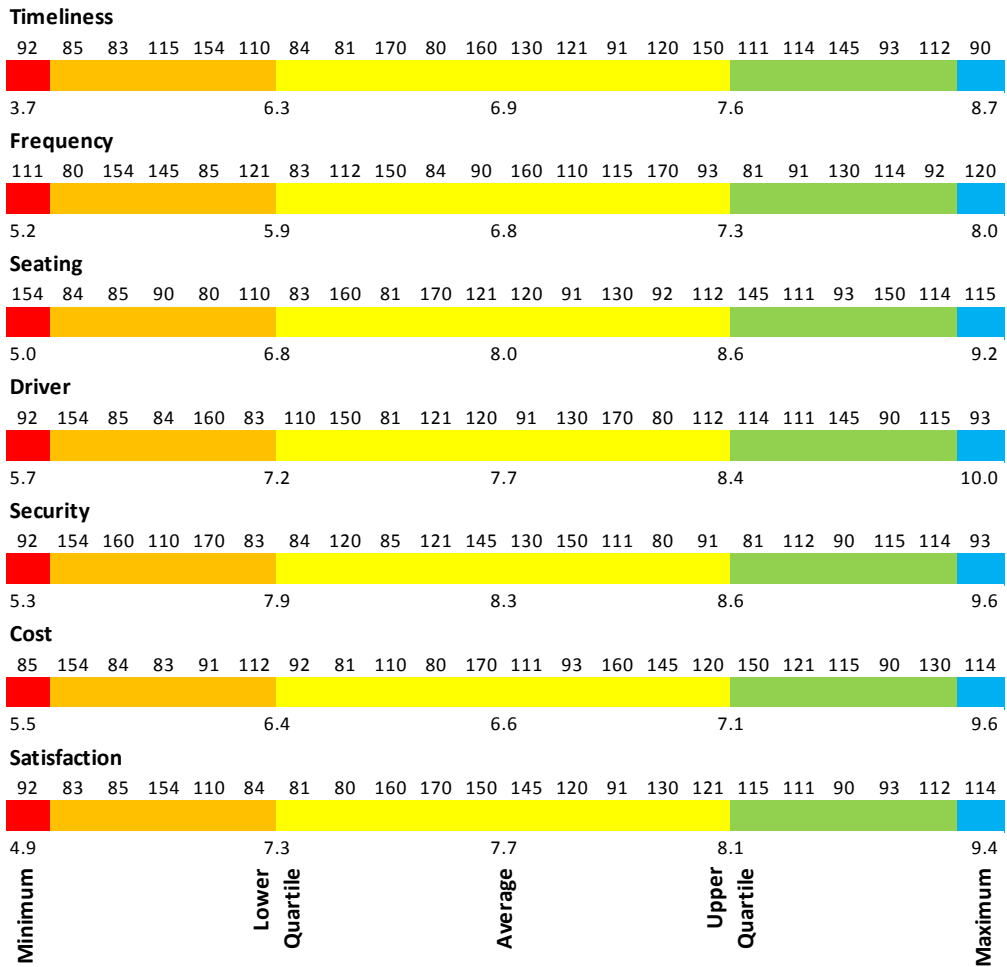
A total of 1,166 surveys were completed by bus customers and 1,079 by rail customers.

Feedback on services was also received online and this information has been considered. Feedback from the Metlink Call Centre and Transport Design Enquiry email database was also taken into account.

The chart below details the customer satisfaction results from the bus customer survey. Analysis on the rail survey data is currently being undertaken at time of writing this report and is not ready for publication.

Each bar in the chart below represents one of the key points customers were surveyed on, such as Timeliness and Frequency for example.

The top line on each bar shows the bus route in relation to its satisfaction score. The bottom line is the satisfaction score as a mark between 1 and 10, 1 being dissatisfied and 10 be very satisfied.

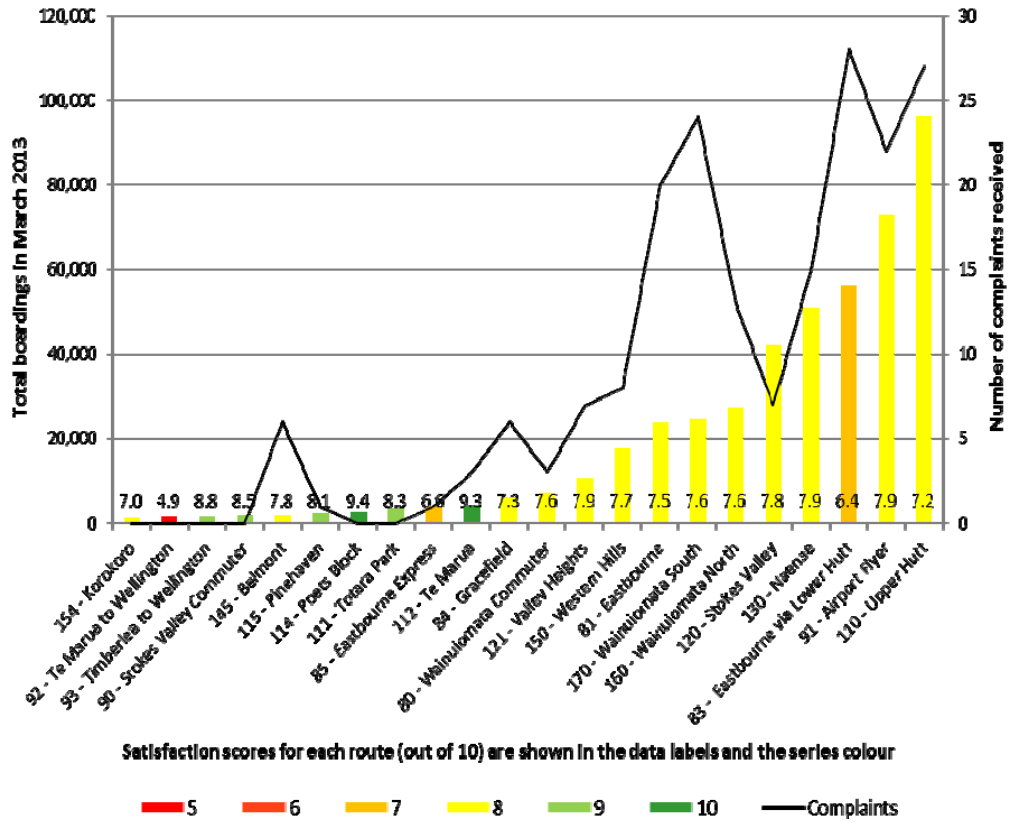


In summary this chart details that at a high level the customers surveyed had an average to very satisfied perception of bus services in the Hutt Valley. From this information we are able to identify particular routes for further analysis where low satisfaction scores have been identified.

It is useful to gauge the number of complaints received by the Metlink Service Centre in relation to the customer satisfaction ratings resulting from the on board surveys.

The graph below lays the monthly total complaints from the applicable route from March 2014 against the customer satisfaction result and boardings for routes.

Number of boardings, complaints and on-bus satisfaction survey results for Hutt Valley bus services



It should be noted that the above graph is not normalised in terms of number of trips per route so should be taken as a guide. Officers will use this as a starting point for further analysis.

The results show similarities in terms of complaints against the customer satisfaction survey results. This is particularly highlighted with the Route 110 (Upper Hutt) and Routes 160 and 170 (Wainuiomata).

Analysis for rail services has not been completed to the extent that it is ready for publication in this report. As the project continues this work will be undertaken and will be published in the Options Report.

5. Patronage Analysis

Patronage analysis in relation to how many customers use particular bus and rail services as well as key origins and destinations is ongoing. This analysis is scheduled to be completed and detailed in the Options Report which will be available in August.

6. Operator Discussions

Our consultants who are assisting with the review met with NZ Bus and Tranz Metro representatives in early May. These operators were briefed on the purpose of the review and a discussion then took place to gain initial thoughts on what they consider could be key improvements to the network.

The following are the key points raised by operators:

NZ Bus

- points of transfer between buses (and buses and rail); passengers achieving connections, particularly early morning/late night
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in current contracts can be troublesome to achieve where there is a reliance on connections with other service providers (i.e. Tranz Metro, Runcimans etc)
- Bunny Street layout of bus stops has a number shortcomings, both operationally and in terms of safety
- Unauthorised use of the bus lane along Petone Esplanade
- Driver safety/shift duration on some routes.

Tranz Metro

- Please note timetable changes will be introduced following arrival and commissioning of 2nd Matangi fleet in 2015/2016
- Pole replacement scheduled to commence in 12-18 months' time, which will require extensive rail replacement services (noted that buses replacing trains struggle to run to timetable during peak traffic conditions). Specific bus replacement timetables should be considered.

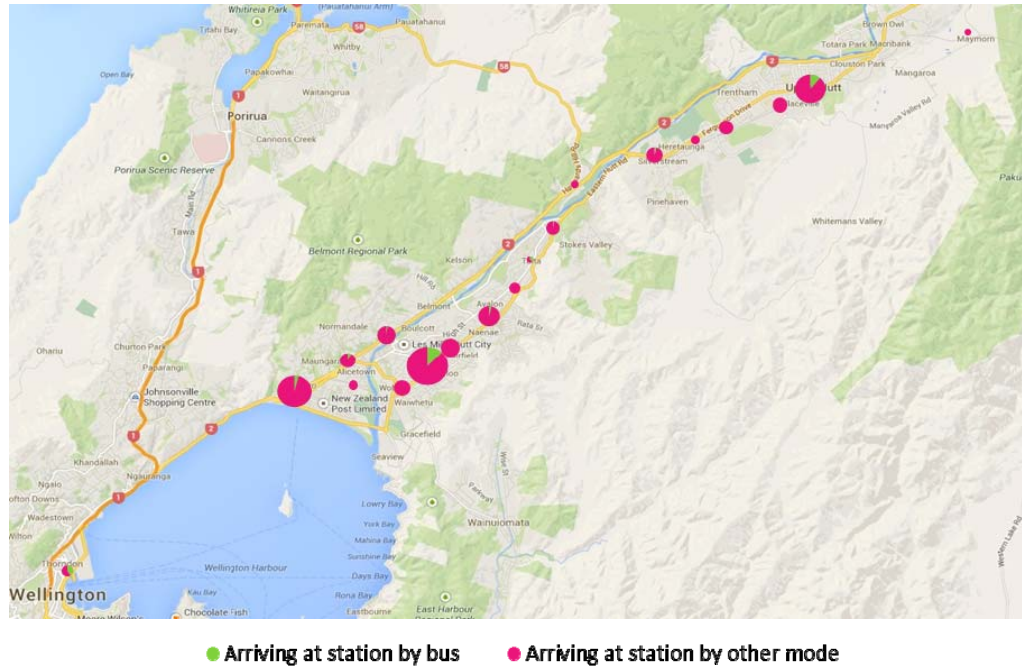
As expected from operators the feedback was very operationally based on how to improve services from this perspective. Officers will give further consideration for methods of improving the operational process and communication between connecting bus and train services.

Attachment 2 contains the full notes of the comments from the operator meetings.

The transfer process between bus and train and vice versa was raised by operators as a potential where improvements could be made which would greatly benefit customers.

The following diagram details the number of passengers surveyed who arrived at their respective rail stations either by bus or other mode of transport.

Surveyed passenger numbers vs. proportion arriving at station by bus



This diagram would suggest that currently there is considerable room to improve the inter mode connections to encourage use of public transport to travel to and from rail stations. It is imperative that customers have confidence in the timeliness and frequency of connecting services.

7. Targeted Consultation

Targeted community consultation will take place with communities which are either not currently served or have limited public transport services. In order to identify the targeted communitie(s) to consult with a Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis has been undertaken. The base data on the GIS maps is taken from the 2013 census.

Attachment 3 is a GIS map which primarily details the location of the population in the Hutt Valley and overlays the bus and rail links onto this population mapping. This map shows the synergy between higher population areas and access to public transport services.

Attachment 4 maps key employment centres in the Hutt Valley and overlays bus and rail public transport links over this. This shows a synergy between higher employment areas and access to public transport services.

The following table details the current populations in both Hutt City and Upper Hutt City within 500m walk of a bus stop.

	Population within 500m of a bus stop	Total Population	%Total
Upper Hutt City	34,540	39,585	87%
Hutt City	94,110	98,219	96%
Total	128,650	137,804	93%

We can conclude from the GIS information that at a high level public transport coverage in the Hutt Valley in relation to places of residence and employment is good. As stated in section 5 of this report further work is scheduled to be undertaken to identify the potential to fine tune respective services to make them better serve the community.

8. Key Focus Areas

As a result of the customer surveys, operator discussions and other customer feedback the following key focus areas have been identified for further analysis. It should be noted however that as the project is in mid-term other focus areas may be identified in addition to the following:

- detailed patronage and key origin and destination analysis to be undertaken in order to for services to better meet the needs of the community in the Hutt Valley
- further investigation of bus routes identified with low customer satisfaction survey results to improve performance
- identification and confirmation of communities(y) with limited, or not currently served by public transport, where potential new services could be investigated
- options to identify where current scheduled services are suitable and have capacity to carry school/college students instead of providing dedicated school services
- operational analysis on bus/rail connection process in order to improve customer confidence in this process
- development of the Bunny Street Bus Interchange in Hutt City in conjunction with Hutt City Council
- further analysis on the potential for a cross valley public transport link between the Hutt Valley and Porirua².

² There are currently commercial cross valley bus links operating. These are dedicated school services and the Route 97 which operates between Porirua, Johnsonville and the Weltec campus in Petone. Officers have been given verbal notice that it is the intention of the Route 97 operator (Mana Coach Services) to discontinue the Route 97 in the near future due to the withdrawal of funding for it from Weltec which would mean this service is no longer sustainable to them as a commercial venture.

9. Next Steps

The following table details the current project timeline from June 2014 onwards:

Month	Task	Description
June	Stakeholder updates Options identification and assessment	Update to Upper Hutt City Council. Initial key focus areas identified for further consideration.
July	Stakeholder updates Draft recommendations Bus and Rail patronage data analysis	Updates to Hutt City Council Community Boards and Committees. Collate consultation and data and produce draft recommendations Patronage data to be analysed to detail loading on services as well as key destinations and travel patterns
August	Options Report Targeted community consultation	Report on initial options for service improvements Consultation in communities identified as having the potential for new or additional public transport services.
September/October	Consultation round 2	Present findings and draft consultation to stakeholders for final input
November	Final recommendations	Final report detailing recommendations

It should be noted that the recommendations in the final report will be planned for implementation in conjunction with the new bus and rail operating contracts during 2017. Officers will however consider the recommendations and assess the practicability of implementing some earlier than this.

10. Communication

A media release will be circulated in the Hutt Valley local press for the purpose of updating the general public on the progress of the project.

Upper Hutt City Councillors and Officers will be updated on the project on June 24 at a specially convened meeting.

Hutt City Community Boards and Committees and Councillors who sit on these bodies will be updated on the project at their scheduled meetings during July and August.

11. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

12. Recommendations

That the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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