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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 Strategy and Policy Committee (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) is undertaking a review of public transport services within the Hutt Valley. This project began under the remit of the Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan 2011-2021 which required regular service reviews to be carried out to ensure public transport services operate effectively and efficiently as part of an integrated public transport network.¹

The Business Case for the review was approved by the Economic Wellbeing Committee on 26 March 2013 (Report 13.124 refers). This report detailed the following points to be addressed as part of the project scope:

- bus, train, and ferry connectivity
- patronage, capacity, and demand
- changes in travel patterns
- changes in population catchments and land development
- span of service hours
- frequency of services; and
- the potential for east-west links.

The project assumed there was not a need for a fundamental redesign of the current network and was more about fine tuning current services to provide an improved level of service for customers.

Milestones 3 and 4 of the project have now been completed. The tasks required to complete these milestones included an analysis of customer

¹ This plan has now been succeeded by the Wellington Regional Public Transport Plan 2014 which was approved by Council on 26 June 2014

perception of the public transport services within the Hutt Valley and patronage data analysis. A summary of the outcomes of this work is presented in this report.

3. Project Timeline

The project is progressing as per the timeline and will be completed by the scheduled dates. 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 (survey results are contained in section 7 of Attachment 1 - Data Analysis Summary Report)		
Bus	May 2014	Completed
Rail	June 2014	Completed
4. Bus data analysed (see section 4 of Attachment 1 - Data Analysis Summary Report .)	July 2014	Completed
5. Consultation round 2 (Riverstone Terraces)	September/October 2014	Underway
Options Report	October 2014	Underway
6. Final recommendations	November 2014	

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

4. Data Analysis Summary Report

The Data Analysis Summary Report was the key deliverable for this stage of the project (see **Attachment 1**). The report provides information on the following key elements:

- route capacity and demand
- network coverage
- operator engagement; and

- customer feedback.

4.1 Capacity and demand

An analysis of patronage was undertaken to better understand capacity and demand on particular routes by trip. This information is important when used in conjunction with other sections in the Data Analysis Summary Report to produce a rounded view of usage on the Hutt Valley's public transport network.

An example of the further work which the data in this section points to is the potential to combine some school services with scheduled services to better utilise resources.

4.2 Network coverage

The service area and catchment review used census data overlaid onto GIS maps. This allowed officers to analyse the coverage of the current public transport network in relation to employment and population density.

The following table details the current populations in both Hutt City and Upper Hutt City within 500m walk of a bus stop and shows the excellent network coverage currently in the Hutt Valley:

	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%

Part of the scope of this project was to undertake further study of communities that are not currently served by or have limited public transport, where potential new services could be investigated. The Data Analysis Summary Report suggests some areas where there is potential to improve public transport services.

In October 2012 a limited bus service was launched in Riverstone Terraces. This has been shown to be popular predominantly with students travelling to local schools and colleges. Community feedback has been that additional services would be supported by residents if launched. Officers have identified this as a community where there is potential for additional service and, as such, targeted consultation has taken place.

A mail drop has been undertaken to households in Riverstone Terraces referring them to a web survey. **Attachment 2** details the survey we have asked residents to complete. The purpose of the survey is to gain a better understanding of their needs in terms of a bus service. This feedback will be used in the design of a potential improved level of service for the Riverstone Terraces Community.

The closing date for the survey is 22 September and results are expected to be available by early to mid-October.

The other communities identified in the Data Analysis Summary Report with limited or no public transport services have low population density over a widespread catchment. For this reason, it would not be viable to provide a public transport bus service which would be sustainable to the ratepayer.

4.3 Operator engagement

Comments and suggestions from operators have been received and noted in the Data Analysis Summary Report.

Officers will give further consideration to these comments in order to improve the public transport network operation and will continue to engage with operators as the review continues.

4.4 Customer surveys and feedback

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

In summary, 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. The contracted routes with low overall satisfaction scores are the Route 110 (Emerald Hill to Upper Hutt to Petone) and Route 154 (Korokoro).

Analysis was undertaken on customers travel habits where intermodal journeys were undertaken by using both bus and train. The majority of bus trips surveyed were single mode, single legged trips. The Routes 150 (Western Hills), 160 and 170 (Wainuiomata) had a sizeable proportion of trips where customers connected to train services. It is also noted in the report that Routes 111, 112, 114, and 115 in Upper Hutt, which are designed as feeder routes, had a lower proportion of customers using these to connect with train services.

Respondents also gave us their views on what their reasons were for not using bus services to travel to the train station to continue their journey. Many respondents chose to drive to the train station as 'bus trips were slow compared to car'. Other reasons related to there being no convenient bus route, or bus timetables not allowing for an effective bus-train connection.

4.5 Further Work

Areas identified for further work are to:

- improve reliability on a number of services, for example the Route 110

- improve the connection timings between bus and rail, for example the Route 120
- investigate the potential to combine some school services with scheduled services for better use of resources, for example Upper Hutt local services with some Upper Hutt school services
- undertake further analysis to better utilise capacity on vehicles
- undertake targeted consultation in communities with limited or no public transport service, for example Riverstone Terraces; and
- look at the potential for east-west links between the Hutt Valley and Porirua.

An Options and Recommendations Report will be drafted which builds on this further work.

5. Stakeholder updates

Officers have presented project updates to both Hutt City and Upper Hutt City councillors. These presentations gave a summary of the information given to GWRC councillors at the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting on 14 May 2014 (Report 14.243 refers).

6. Next Steps

Targeted consultation with Riverstone Terraces community closed on 22 September. Feedback from this will be considered in further route design for this community.

An Options Report will be published in late October. This will give more detail on the Key Focus Areas highlighted in section 4.5 of this report.

A final report with recommendations will be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee at its meeting on 3 December.

7. Communication

A media release will be circulated to the Hutt Valley local press for the purpose of updating the local community on the projects progress.

Further update briefings are planned with Hutt City and Upper Hutt City Councillors once the final recommendations have been drafted.

Discussions with operators will be ongoing.

8. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report.

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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Attachment 1: Data Analysis Summary Report

Attachment 2: Riverstone Terraces bus services survey