

12 October 2018

Regional Public Transport Plan Review
Freepost 1201
Environment Canterbury
PO Box 345
Christchurch 8140

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: draft Regional Public Transport Plan

Christchurch City Council supports the draft Regional Public Transport Plan (the Plan) and the partnership approach taken to develop the plan. The Plan supports the Council strategic priorities to: increase public, active and shared transport; creating a 21st Century City; and climate change leadership. Council supports the collaborative approach that has been taken by the Joint Public Transport Committee (Joint Committee) over the last few years to develop the Plan.

Support for vision and network changes

Council fully supports the thirty year vision and new approach of the Plan. We will continue to work closely with the Committee on delivering the vision and the planning for future rapid transit in Greater Christchurch.

We support the new network approach to grow patronage by increasing the number and frequency of core services. However, we are concerned that there are some areas of our community (mainly in the north and eastern suburbs) that may not have adequate access to services and that more people in these areas could become transport disadvantaged. Council will continue to work with Environment Canterbury to explore the most innovative ways to provide a range of public transport services to connect communities to these new core services. As a next step Council will develop a prioritised programme of public transport infrastructure to support new services which will be consulted on through our Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

Council fully supports the increased focus on the customer in the Plan and the goal to make it easier for people to use the bus more often. The free bus day proved to be a successful way of introducing more people to the concept of bus travel and thus increasing patronage. Council encourages Environment Canterbury to hold similar events in the future as a good way to promote public transport. The 60% increase in patronage on the free bus day also demonstrates that the cost of public transport is a relevant factor in individual decisions to use the bus and that public transport is an important public service to many.

Council supports the trial of an inner city shuttle to make it easier to access all areas of the central city, particularly to link new residential areas with commercial areas. The Council are developing a Central City Action Plan of initiatives to encourage more people back into the central city. The inner city shuttle trial would support the goals of the action plan.

Environment and emissions are a top priority

Council fully supports the top priority of improving our environment in the draft Plan, particularly the transition to zero emission vehicles. The current draft could still allow fossil fuelled vehicles to dominate the fleet for the next 9 years and needs strengthening so that there are real inbuilt incentives to transition quickly to electric vehicles.

Council is committed to climate change leadership, to the Christchurch City Council organisation being nett carbon neutral by 2030 and to the city as a whole being nett carbon neutral by 2050. Both are stretch targets that we will need to work hard to meet. Council's clear ambition is for a zero emission public transport fleet. Council believes a zero emission public transport fleet is a real desire of the people of Christchurch, who have told the Council many times that they expect leadership in climate change.

The Plan should place greater recognition on the likely carbon savings and benefits of moving to a zero emission fleet sooner. As the Plan recognises, transport currently contributes to around 40% of our total emissions, therefore transport fleets become incredibly important in meeting our carbon targets. The Council's own compact fleet is now 100% electric and shared with other businesses and the public through Yoogo. Council has already saved over 50 tonnes of carbon through this since its inception. There is likely to be a significant increase in national carbon tax over the next decade to meet the government's stated objective of nett carbon neutrality by 2050 (as recently highlighted in the Productivity Commission "Low-emissions economy" report¹). The draft Plan should take account of this additional cost from carbon taxes when forecasting the transition to a zero emission fleet.

Council believes that the review of service contracts, planned in 2020, is an opportune time to transition to zero emission vehicles. It is vital to Council that the Policy and procurement strategy is backed up by mechanisms for achieving that. Council recommends that a mechanism is built into the procurement strategy, well before the next review of service contracts in 2020, to ensuring a higher weighting for electric or zero emission vehicles this will guarantee their adoption as soon as possible. The procurement strategy must be very clear about this preference for zero emission vehicles, well before contracts are considered and granted.

Concession fares

Council supports the extension of concession fares to everyone aged under 25. Extending the eligibility of discounted fares makes using public transport more affordable and viable for more young people and provides them with a good alternative to driving.

Recognising the need for increased investment to transform public transport and land use

Realising the vision for our public transport system and managing the transport effects of urban growth will require an increase in public transport investment. The Government has signalled through the GPS that the overall level of capital investment available for public transport will be greater, reflecting the strategic focus of shifting trips in New Zealand's cities from private vehicles to more efficient, low cost modes of transport. Public transport, especially rapid transit to the north and south-west of Christchurch is key to managing urban growth in Greater Christchurch. Planning for future public transport is well underway through the Future Public Transport Business Case.

¹ Productivity Commission (2018) Low emission economy" Final Report
<https://www.productivity.govt.nz/inquiry-content/3254?stage=4>

Council will support Environment Canterbury and the Joint Committee to work with the Government to secure funding to help accelerate the delivery of the Plan vision. Council will also support Environment Canterbury to work with Government to enable public transport services to be better funded through access to the recent changes to the Financial Assistance Rates by NZTA.

Governance and delivery

Council will continue to work with the Joint Committee to actively encourage government to review the governance model for public transport, especially within Greater Christchurch. A joined up model is needed to better align the responsibility and delivery of public transport services and infrastructure.

We would also like to work with Environment Canterbury to approach government with recommend changes to the Public Transport Operating Model. The Council believes the current model results in long service contracts (for nine years) which limit innovation and the trial of new service types within the public transport service industry.

Christchurch City Council would like to thank Environment Canterbury for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft "Regional Public Transport Plan". Please also find attached feedback from the Community Boards.

Yours faithfully



Mayor Lianne Dalziel
Christchurch City Council

Attachment A: Community Board feedback

Banks Peninsula Community Board

- The Board would like to assist with raising awareness of the local services within outlying communities to reinforce the viability of rural services. People in outlying communities must understand this is a “use it or lose it” situation.
- Increase the profile of park-and-ride services. Create places where commuters can leave their vehicle and ride the bus to the CBD. If parking is not convenient, the service will not be used.
- Create a park-and-ride corridor for Lincoln Road, specifically the route from which Lincoln and Halswell commute.
- Smaller buses on the Peninsula may be more appropriate as the population is sparse.
- Coordinating bus routes with connecting ferry timetables, as well as popularising the ability to take bikes aboard, is important. This includes improving communications with ferry operators, so that bus drivers who are running late can coordinate with Diamond Harbour timetables.
- The Board requests that buses on the tunnel route include the capability to bring a bicycle inside the cabin, or to attach it to the outside of the bus, as there are no bike routes connecting the Harbour to the CBD.
- The Board supports infrastructure to provide disabled access to the Diamond Harbour wharf and to bus stops where there are barriers to “hopping aboard”, such as poor footpaths, culverts, etc.
- Coordinate with the Little River community to utilise research regarding the setup of community transport services.

Waipuna/Halswell-Hornby-Riccarton Community Board

- The Board agrees with the objective stated in the document that: *“Public transport is innovative and successful and sits at the heart of a transport network that supports a thriving, liveable greater Christchurch. The public transport system is accessible and convenient, with high quality, zero emission vehicles and facilities”* However, the details of the document do not in any way guarantee an electric or zero emission transport fleet and we think it is essential that this is made clear because it will not happen without it.
- The Board totally endorses the Council’s climate change leadership and targets for the organisation and the City as a whole. Transport is absolutely fundamental in those targets and we believe that the people of Christchurch aspire to an environmentally friendly public transport system.
- The public transport fleet should be totally electric or zero emission. This plan does not spell out the detail of how this will happen, and in the absence of real teeth in this section, it simply won’t happen. We want the mechanism built in to the procurement system such that there is a significant weighting for electric or zero emission vehicles from day one of this contract so that the economic investment required is worthwhile for contracting companies and so that this becomes a reality.
- The current document only stipulates that any new vehicles will be zero emissions from 2025. It is entirely possible in this nine year contract period for all vehicles to be fossil fuelled. So this document as it stands means that it is entirely possible for none of the environmental objectives to be met for the next decade. We cannot wait ten years for our Public Transport fleet to be electric.
- The document needs much more rigour about how those environmental objectives frequently expressed throughout will be met.

- The procurement policy weighting for zero emissions should be clearly stated in the document because none of the “How” is expressed, and the document leaves open the very real possibility of very little improvement in the carbon emissions of the public transport fleet.
- The document makes no mention of any possible carbon tax in the next decade, and yet it is hard to imagine how New Zealand will meet the government’s stated objective of nett carbon neutrality by 2050 without a major hike in the price of carbon, as per the Productivity Commission report.
- It is absolutely vital to the Council that the stated objective of a transport fleet that has zero emissions is backed up by real mechanisms for achieving that. The graph for example on the supposed uptake of zero emission vehicles is indicative only and actually there may be no new vehicles procured between 2025 and 2029 ,...so none of that step looking to increase in Zero emission vehicles may happen .
- We liked the free bus day and we think this is good advertising for buses as a travel mode and should happen on a good number of more occasions. We think it's a good way of introducing people to the concept of bus travel and increasing the uptake.
- We think PTOM is a system that has not helped in the development of a good public transport system and we would like the Council to work with ECan to approach the government on this because we think the impacts of that model are seriously negative.
- The Board is disappointed that the document provides only a limited mention of park and ride facilities, example, Page 24 *“The enhancement of Park and Ride opportunities for Selwyn and Waimakariri only.”*
- The Board has had a long held view that positioned appropriately on or near the city's outskirts, these facilities would be fully utilised and contribute much to boosting patronage levels as well as helping with traffic congestion.
- Objective 1D Policy 1.14, page 29, touches on transport integration with land use development/change but needs to commit to Park and Ride as an option. Example here being the RPS and our own District Plan allowing for Key Activity Centre development e.g. in Halswell that could very easily allow Park and Ride as a development component utilizing internationally proven permeable car parking and storm water management as a lower investment and dual outcome option.
- Objective 2C Policy 2.9, page 30, mentions *“Accessible Infrastructure and services”* and expands on new infrastructure as being of a higher standard regarding footpaths, kerbs for improved accessibility. This needs to include a clause the likes of *“A programmed retro fit of the existing stops”*. The Board is aware of issues at local bus stops including situations where the bus stop is located against a storm water grate or is on a deep dish gutter with no access cut down.
- We must assist those who are elderly or less mobile and safer embark/disembark points across the whole network are a must, not just the new ones.

Linwood-Central-Heathcote Community Board

- Support the Central City Shuttle Trial
- Providing better waiting experiences (Christchurch is a windy city) and in the future, moving to more flexible options for non-core commuting
- Support electrifying the passenger service fleet quickly to obtain a zero emission target. However, members wouldn’t want to see an accelerated programme of electric bus roll-out, if that had an effect of the amount of funds available for subsidies on poor performing routes. If this was the case they would prefer a slower more organic electric fleet roll-out.

- Free Bus Days to increase the awareness of the passenger transport service.
- Increasing the frequency on core routes is essential, noting that if you can be sure of a buses run every 10 min that significantly lessens the need to be concerned about timetables compared even to every 15mins.
- The community has advised that lack of easy access to affordable transport for poorer people is a major barrier to having a better life, so the needs of these communities are not forgotten in this plan.
- Appreciate 'park and ride' options, especially for the hill suburbs and for shorter trips to town.
- Dogs in carriers to be allowed on buses as in Wellington.

Fendalton-Waimairi-Harewood Community Board

- The Board appreciates and acknowledges the work done in developing the draft Plan.
- The Board supports effective public transport through buses (large and small) and a range of different transport mediums to reduce congestion on our roads, improve users' experience and to be environmentally sustainable. To encourage patronage the Board recommends that routes and timetables be easily adapted to meet the needs of changing user requirements eg smaller buses covering a wider network and that costs are low enough to entice people away from using private vehicles.
- The Board is very supportive of the two new high frequency bus routes proposed for its area. It does however, recommend that the proposed new route down Harewood Road, passing Bishopdale Mall, includes direct connections to the central city to allow people to easily access the new and existing attractions and facilities via public transport rather than using private vehicles.
- With regard to the proposed high frequency route down Wairakei Road to the Airport, the Board notes that right hand turning arrows will be required at the Roydvale Road/Memorial Avenue intersection to assist buses turning from Roydvale Road into Memorial Avenue towards the airport.
- The Board notes that the experience of customers using public transport needs to be improved and recommends that whatever the method of public transport, patrons need be confident they will reach their destination by the expected time. A multi-agency approach may be required to put in place methods to achieve this.
- The Board further suggests that on-board route information be installed in multi-user modes of public transport to assist in identifying the approaching stop. Expansion of the existing colour coded routes/buses to encompass all routes with appropriately painted strips at bus stops to indicate which buses are scheduled to stop there, would also benefit visitors to the area.
- To encourage patronage of the public transport options the Board recommends that the cost of taking public transport needs to be low enough to entice people away from using private vehicles.
- While outside of the scope of this feedback, the Board recommends that the possible extension of the current hospital shuttle bus route to include stopping at the central city Bus Exchange is discussed with the Canterbury District Health Board.

Coastal-Burwood Community Board

- The Board agrees with the plan and visions in general.
- A balance is required between providing for high frequency lines and meeting the needs of the transport-disadvantaged following the 2014 cutbacks which affected connectability within the Coastal Burwood Wards.

- The Board considers the funding share to be inequitable and suggested that the fares percentage be reduced to 30% with the increase coming from Government grants.
- The Board suggested retaining the Gold Card advantages and that consideration be given to lowering fares to attract more users.
- Additional discounted fares should be funded by Central Government.
- The Board agrees with a free central city shuttle, noting that this has previously been the case. This should be funded by Central Government.
- The Board agrees that the public transport fleet should transition to zero emission vehicles. Maintaining fleets on electric is cheaper.
- Reducing the cost of fares/travel would encourage more use of public transport.
- Rapid transit corridors need to be planned for now.
- The Board suggests consideration be given to a new route that would provide a link from Southshore to New Brighton, North Brighton, Parklands, Tumara Park, Prestons, Spencerville, Burwood and QEII Park (Tairora QEII Recreation Centre) and The Palms. Avondale had no bus service at all and Dallington route is three bus changes to reach the CBD.
- One suggestion is a trial utilising a small bus based locally to reconnect our ward-fringe suburbs and those left without any bus service at all. The previous cuts to eastern suburbs were extremely hard for our population exacerbating post-earthquake losses to people. Our preference is reinstatement of the original routes. Frequencies can be adapted however, no bus service for outlying suburbs is not acceptable.
- The current Plan exacerbates the transport disadvantaged problem by not catering for Styx/Brooklands/Spencerville as well as parts of Avondale – Wainoni – Aranui. It is recommended that the Orbiter be reinstated and should return to its route through Dallington to Tairora QEII, noting that the two high schools currently under construction on that site will be opening mid-2019.
- The Public transport joint committee visionary statements agreed upon in principle by the Board with some suggestions:
 - The Plan does not address widespread social isolation because of poor access.
 - The Committee acknowledged that finance is an issue in supporting the aims of the Plan.
 - The funding shortfall needs to be addressed to provide equality between east and west route/frequency provisions.