



Report 07.284
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Committee Passenger Transport
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Funding of bus priority measures

1. Purpose

To decide on the future of the Council's involvement in funding bus priority measures, given that Land Transport NZ has indicated that it will no longer fund regional councils for this activity.

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

Bus priority measures are an important component of any high quality passenger transport system. Greater Wellington currently supports bus priority measures through the following policies in the Draft Regional Passenger Transport Plan (November 2006):

- Policy 5.1.1 identifies an intention to maintain existing dedicated passenger transport corridors and to continue adding bus lanes.
- Policy 5.4.1 seeks to improve journey times for passenger transport relative to the private car by (amongst other things) increasing the scope and provision of bus priority measures, especially in and approaching the Wellington CBD.

Greater Wellington has also supported the implementation of bus priority measures in the past. Projects supported by Greater Wellington include the bus lane on Petone Esplanade and a number of projects in Wellington city, including:

1. Lambton Quay
2. Kent Terrace (Elizabeth Street to Basin Reserve)

3. Adelaide Road (Drummond Street to Basin Reserve)
4. Kaiwharawhara Road
5. Glenmore Street
6. Chaytor Street, Karori

There was a funding contribution from Greater Wellington for all these projects. This was often subsidised by Land Transport NZ.

Land Transport NZ has recently advised however that it will no longer fund regional councils for the implementation of bus priority measures (although it will fund road controlling authorities).

The Land Transport NZ decision appears logical as regional councils must rely on territorial authorities, as road controlling authorities, to implement bus priority measures anyway. The decision ties funding more directly to implementation of the project but it doesn't prevent regional authorities from contributing to territorial authorities' local share. The decision also avoids confusion and potential for duplicate applications from regional and territorial authorities.

The Land Transport NZ decision raises the issue of whether GW should continue to be involved in funding bus priority measures. In particular, it raises the issue of what to do with the funding provided for bus priority measures in the 2007/08 Annual Plan.

4. Discussion

Wellington City Council's Strategy and Policy Committee recently considered a Bus Priority Plan proposing a comprehensive network of bus priority measures. The Bus Priority Plan would be implemented over the next ten-years at a cost of between \$16 and \$33 million. The full extent of the proposed bus lane network is shown in Attachment 1.

Wellington City Council reaffirmed its commitment to bus priority measures and requested that officers "...provide further information on the benefits and costs of individual proposals, and in particular the level of congestion delay experienced by buses, so that a clearer prioritised programme can be developed". Wellington City Council officers have indicated a number of proposals which have strong economic benefits and which could be delivered in the next financial year. These proposals include:

1. Adelaide Road (Basin Reserve to John Street)
2. Courtenay Place to Lambton Quay
3. Kent/Cambridge Terrace
4. Molesworth /Mulgrave Streets
5. Taranaki Street (Courtenay Place to Buckle Street)
6. Tinakori Road to the City

Wellington City Council has identified \$12 million in their Long Term Council Community Plan for implementation of bus priority measures over the next ten years. Additional funding will be required to achieve the entire \$16 to \$33 million programme.

Greater Wellington can help bridge this funding gap by providing additional funding towards local share. Regional funding is particularly appropriate for implementation of bus priority measures in the Wellington CBD where a significant number of passengers travel from outside of Wellington City boundaries. It is noted that Porirua City Council, Hutt City Council and Upper Hutt City Council have all indicated they have no current proposal for bus priority measures.

Greater Wellington's Proposed 2007/08 Annual Plan includes \$150,000 for development of bus priority measures and \$45,000 for maintenance of bus priority measures¹. Given that Land Transport NZ will now only subsidise road controlling authorities for bus priority measures, it is recommended that these budgets be made available to Wellington City Council for implementation of its highest ranking bus priority measures (listed above) in the Wellington CBD during 2007/08, and maintenance.

Beyond 2007/08, Greater Wellington will need to liaise with Wellington City Council (and other road controlling authorities) regarding the selecting and funding of bus priority measures. Wellington City Council officers have indicated that they are seeking a multi-year funding agreement from Land Transport NZ for implementation of their entire package of bus priority measures. If such an agreement is successful Greater Wellington will also in the future need to consider its commitment to a multi-year package.

These are longer term issues that should ideally be considered as part of the Regional Passenger Transport Plan. Further work and consultation is therefore recommended to identify how bus priority measures should be funded and implemented in the longer term.

5. Communications

The Committee's decision will be communicated to Wellington City Council. No further communication is required at this stage.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.
3. **Agrees** that the Proposed 2007/08 Annual Plan should retain funding for development and maintenance of bus priority measures.

¹ These figures are 50% of current figures which assume an LTNZ funding contribution that is no longer available to regional councils.

4. *Agrees to support Wellington City Council's planned implementation of bus priority measures during the 2007/08 financial year by contributing funding of \$150,000 towards the highest ranking bus priority measures in the Wellington CBD.*
5. *Agrees to contribute \$45,000 in the 2007/08 financial year for maintenance of existing bus priority measures.*
6. *Agrees that officers carry out further work to identify how bus priority measures should be funded and implemented in the longer term.*

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Attachment 1: Wellington City Council's proposed bus lane network