

9. JOINT CITY COUNCIL/ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRATEGY REVIEW

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the current work underway on updating the 1998 Joint City Council/Environment Canterbury Public Transport Strategy: Our Future, Our Choice.

Environment Canterbury has as an objective for this financial year to undertake a review of the Our Future, Our Choice Public Transport Strategy. The first stage of that process was to engage a consultant to determine the framework and needs of such a review. The results of that review were presented to committees of each Council late last year.

As a consequence of that scoping work, it was accepted that there was no need to undertake a fundamental review of the public transport strategy, as much of the document was still relevant and applicable. The focus was therefore accepted as being based on a simple update of the current strategy, with a significant review of the whole strategy proposed for 2006, to time in with the next major review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy.

With this in mind, the need for widespread public consultation was removed, and only a limited consultation has taken place with the Passenger Transport Advisory Group, which was the key community steering group for the initial strategy development (a very helpful sounding board group from the wider community and public transport sector). Similarly an opportunity is offered with this report for the boards to provide any key thoughts on the current strategy, particularly that could be included in the future action plans of the document. The draft proposed action plans are attached for information, split according to the responsible organisation.

The initial strategy production was born out of a time of virtual crisis for the public transport system in Christchurch, when there had been a significant drop in patronage just prior and public interest and support for a public transport system in Christchurch was marginal at best. The growth and development of the public transport system since that time have been substantial, with patronage having almost doubled and public perceptions and support being generally very positive now. A major turn around in the public transport system has been achieved in the past 5 years or so, since the strategy was created.

Our Future, Our Choice contains a number of action tables and targets set which were framed in essentially a one and two year time line. These tables of actions need updating as most of the actions listed have been addressed, and new actions need agreeing to focus planning and budgets over the coming few years. This will allow us to seek to maintain the momentum of growth and development of the system experienced over recent years.

Similarly, the initial targets were set for both the near term and longer term. Having now passed the near term target dates, a new series of "near term" targets are needed. It was also discovered since the initial strategy that some of the indicators needed revising in terms of how they were described/measured, and the update is an opportunity to make some minor adjustments to these matters.

Other than the above two areas, the update work is not proposing any significant changes to the public transport strategy. A new document will be produced that will outline the successes since the first strategy production, the challenges ahead (to continue the current direction and momentum), present key background data, repeat Vision and Objectives and present the updated action tables and targets.

This work is programmed to be reported through the June round of meetings for adoption, with the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee being the lead committee for this project with the City Council. The Board may if it wish take this opportunity to also pass any comments it has on the current strategy to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee for consideration of the update document. Similarly the opportunity is available for the Boards to have a presentation of the updated strategy once it is printed, during its distribution stage currently anticipated in August-September this year.

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: Not seen by the Chairperson.