

7. RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED NORTHERN BUS ROUTES SERVICE CHANGES

Officer responsible
City Streets Manager

Author
Robert Woods, Transport Planner Public Transport and Sustainability,
DDI 941-8060

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of Environment Canterbury's latest consultation on proposals for the northern bus service review and to seek approval to a response from the Council on or before 9 May 2003. The final changes to the services will be implemented by Environment Canterbury in June 2004.

BACKGROUND

Environment Canterbury's contracts with the bus operators Red Bus Ltd and Leopard Coachlines for the northern bus routes come up for renewal in May 2004. New contracts must be tendered for prior to this and will commence in June 2004. Environment Canterbury wishes to take this opportunity to improve and extend the services offered and has sought feedback from stakeholders since early this year. Based on the initial consultation feedback (including that of the City Streets Unit - see appendix 1) preliminary proposals have been prepared and communicated to stakeholders via a leaflet with a freepost reply form. This latest consultation began in late March 2003 and closes on 9 May 2003. This report outlines those proposed changes and discusses further recommendations for the Committee's approval that should be communicated to Environment Canterbury.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO NORTHERN ROUTES

Changes are proposed by Environment Canterbury to existing routes No. 4 Redwood, No. 4 Casebrook, No. 4 Harewood, No. 9 Burnside, No. 10 Harewood, No. 11 Casebrook, No. 13 Redwood, No. 15 Bishopdale, No. 17 Bryndwr, No. 18 St Albans, and A Airport. The proposed changes are summarised as follows:

- No. 4 Redwood is replaced by an extended No. 13 Redwood Service. This service will pass the Northlands Mall and use Papanui Road. There will no longer be a Redwood service along Cranford Street, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- No. 4 Casebrook and No. 11 Casebrook will be replaced by No. 11 Styx Mill. This is an extension of the No. 11 service and will additionally take in Claridges Road, Cavendish Road, Grampian Street, Styx Mill Road and Regents Park Drive. The service will travel via Papanui Road and so there will no longer be a Casebrook service via Cranford Street, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- No. 4 Harewood is replaced by a new No. 14 Nunweek service. This extends the route to Sheffield Crescent via Wooldridge Road, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- No. 9 Burnside becomes No. 19 Burnside and is changed at its northern end to service Sheffield Crescent via Roydvale Avenue and Sir William Pickering Drive. The route is also changed to service the Clyde Road frontage of the University, continuing down to Riccarton Road and entering the city centre from Riccarton Avenue, 30 minute frequency on weekdays and Saturdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- No. 10 Harewood is extended to the airport via Wooldridge Road and Wairakei Road, 30 minute frequency on weekdays and Saturdays, 60 minutes on Sundays.
- No. 11 Casebrook is replaced by No. 11 Styx Mill - see above.
- No. 13 Redwood replaces No. 4 Redwood and the existing No. 13 Redwood - see above.
- No. 15 Bishopdale is extended along Sawyers Arms Road and down Main North Road to Northlands Mall, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- No. 17 Bryndwr does not change, 30 minute frequency on weekdays and Saturdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- No. 18 St Albans does not change, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- A Airport takes a more direct route via Fendalton Road and Harper Avenue, cutting out Kilmarnock Street and Straven Road on its outward bound journey, 20 minute frequency on weekdays and 30 minutes at weekends.

NEW ROUTE PROPOSALS

Environment Canterbury also proposes two new routes.

- No. 12 Northwood via Papanui Road, Main North Road, Northwood Boulevard, Hussey Road and Gardiners Road, terminating at Wilkinsons Road, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.
- NO. 16 Belfast via Papanui Road and Main North Road, terminating at Factory Road, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

CITY STREETS PRELIMINARY FEEDBACK

General and specific comments were conveyed to Environment Canterbury upon their initial request for opinions on the current operation of the northern routes. These comments are attached in appendix 1 and were used to assist in the preparation of the current proposals being consulted upon.

DISCUSSION OF ECAN PROPOSALS

(Comments on individual proposals are in italics.)

- No. 4 Redwood is replaced by an extended No. 13 Redwood service. This service would pass the Northlands Mall and use Papanui Road. There would no longer be a Redwood service along Cranford Street, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

Renaming and renumbering of the service is to be welcomed in providing an easier to use and understandable service. Departures at improved and regular intervals also support the general view that this improves patronage by providing a reliable service and will make the timetable easier to understand.

- No. 4 Casebrook and No. 11 Casebrook will be replaced by No. 11 Styx Mill. This is an extension of the No. 11 service and will additionally take in Claridges Road, Cavendish Road, Grampian Street, Styx Mill Road and Regents Park Drive. The service will travel via Papanui Road and so there will no longer be a Casebrook service via Cranford Street, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

Again, renaming and renumbering of the service is to be welcomed and also the departures at improved and regular intervals will make the timetable easier to understand. It is felt that the route is somewhat circuitous (Veitches Road/Highstead Road/Claridges Road/Grampian Street) and would be better served by remaining on Cavendish Road to secure consistent patronage. In support of this we would suggest providing a new route from Main North Road, serving Sawyers Arms Road, Highstead Road and Claridges Road, terminating at Gardiners Road.

- No. 4 Harewood is replaced by a new No. 14 Nunweek service. This extends the route to Sheffield Crescent via Wooldridge Road, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

Renaming and renumbering of the service is welcomed. Departures at improved and regular intervals is also welcomed and will make the timetable easier to understand. Extension of the No. 4 Harewood service is to be welcomed as it provides a link to the industrial park on Sheffield Crescent for workers who may live near the catchment area of the existing route but have no direct service.

- No. 9 Burnside becomes No. 19 Burnside and is changed at its northern end to service Sheffield Crescent via Roydvale Avenue and Sir William Pickering Drive. The route is also changed to service the Clyde Road frontage of the University, continuing down to Riccarton Road and entering the city centre from Riccarton Avenue, 30 minute frequency on weekdays and Saturdays, 60 minutes at weekends. An additional bus every 30 minutes on Riccarton Road and Riccarton Avenue will result from this change.

Departures at improved and regular intervals support the general view that this improves patronage by providing a reliable and convenient service. Extension of the No. 9 Burnside service to Sheffield Crescent is to be welcomed as it provides a link to the industrial park on Sheffield Crescent for workers who may live near the catchment area of the existing route but have no direct service. Additional servicing of the University will also provide a valuable link for students living beyond a reasonable walking distance.

- No. 10 Harewood is extended to the airport via Wooldridge Road and Wairakei Road, 30 minute frequency on weekdays and Saturdays, 60 minutes on Sundays.

Again, departures at improved and regular intervals are welcomed and support the general view that this improves patronage by providing a reliable and convenient service. The extension to the airport is

to be welcomed as a means for airport workers in particular living north of the Memorial Avenue/Fendalton Road catchment to get to work. Guests going to and from hotels and motels along Papanui Road will also benefit. This new airport link should be vigorously publicised by Ecan at hotels and motels along the route, as well as at the airport.

- No. 15 Bishopdale is extended along Sawyers Arms Road and down Main North Road to Northlands Mall, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

Departures at improved and regular intervals (including weekends) support the general view that this improves patronage by providing a reliable and convenient service, however, there is some concern that extending the route to Northlands Mall may confuse some passengers departing the mall and wishing to travel towards the City. They will be asked to share a bus stop (or at least on the same side of the road) as those heading in the opposite direction. It is recognised however, that this change to the service would be welcomed by the local elderly population wishing to travel to the Northlands Mall. An option to avoid this problem would be to loop the mall by making use of Sissons Drive.

- No. 17 Bryndwr does not change, 30 minute frequency on weekdays and Saturdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

Departures at regular intervals support the general view that this improves patronage by providing a reliable and convenient service. The overall number of trips on Wairakei Road will not change, but the interval between buses will be regular.

- No. 18 St Albans does not change, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

Departures at improved and regular intervals (including weekends) support the general view that this improves patronage by providing a reliable and convenient service. The introduction of traffic signals at the junction of Innes Road and Rutland Street has made the bus turning movements much easier and has contributed to an ongoing improvement service.

- A Airport takes a more direct route via Fendalton Road and Harper Avenue, cutting out Kilmarnock Street and Straven Road on its outward bound journey, 20 minute frequency on weekdays and 30 minutes at weekends.

Once again, departures at improved and regular intervals support the general view that this improves patronage by providing a reliable and convenient service. A single route for the inward and outward bound service outside the city centre is welcomed, as is the more direct route. As a general comment it is felt, however, that the Memorial Avenue/ Fendalton Road corridor is poorly served by buses, and with re-routing of the existing No. 9 Burnside away from Fendalton Road this becomes a bigger area of concern. A 15 minute frequency on Fendalton Road/Memorial Avenue would be preferred. If one of the aims of this service is to support accommodation providers then a change to Bealey Avenue/Colombo Street in both directions would be beneficial. This would also improve the route definition within the inner city for regular users.

- New route No. 12 Northwood via Papanui Road, Main North Road, Northwood Boulevard, Hussey Road and Gardiners Road, terminating at Wilkinsons Road. 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

We welcome the new route and also the frequency of the service. We would repeat our initial general comment that there is an aspiration for an outer Orbiter style service to provide some connectivity between these outlying areas as they develop.

- No. 16 Belfast via Papanui Road and Main North Road, terminating at Factory Road, 30 minute frequency on weekdays, 60 minutes at weekends.

We welcome the new route and also the frequency of the service. We would repeat our initial general comment that there is an aspiration for an outer Orbiter style service to provide some connectivity between these outlying areas as they develop. In terms of the routing, we would see no need to travel the Prestons Road, Grimseys Road and Daniels Road section as the extended No. 13 Redwood service and the new No. 12 Northwood service would already serve this area well.

CONCLUSIONS

The improved frequency and intervals of buses on all days of the week are to be welcomed in providing a simpler, more effective and user friendly service. This supports the principles of achieving continued patronage growth. In general the changes to the routes should be supported in providing improved coverage of the bus system in the north of the city. Some alternative recommendations have been made on the Environment Canterbury routing of services No. 11 and No. 16.

It should be remembered when commenting on these changes that there comes within it an obligation on the Council to provide appropriate new bus stops and other infrastructure where existing routes change and where new routes run. This commitment is measured in the basic costs of providing infrastructure and the commitment of staff resources to planning, consultation and design.

ECan have indicated that routes No. 10 Harewood, No. 11 Styx Mill and No. 13 Redwood will be through routed to Cashmere, Westmorland and Dyers Pass respectively.

The impact of these changes on major routes into and out of the city is difficult to accurately predict without sight of a timetable for each route, however, some qualitative judgements can be made. In general where there is no change in the number of bus routes on a road, then there is no change in the total number of bus trips, but the frequency would become regular throughout the day. Notable exceptions obviously occur where an additional bus route is added to a road. Examples of this are Cranford Street (where the No. 16 Belfast and No. 14 Nunweek services are proposed to replace the No. 4 Harewood/Casebrook/Redwood services). With the introduction of the No. 14 and No. 16 routes, four buses an hour each way in the daytime would result, compared to the existing two buses an hour. Similar daytime increases will result on Main North Road and Papanui Road.

A major concern arising from these new and improved routes and frequencies is the effect these have on the operation of Colombo Street. Whilst sensible timetabling would regulate the arrival of buses in the city centre, it is inevitable that additional pressure will be placed on an already close to capacity network, with the bus exchange as its hub. ECan have made clear their views in earlier presentations to the Council on the need for a quasi cross and bus priority on major bus corridors before through routing can be widely introduced to improve bus operation in the city centre.

Staff

Recommendation: That the recommendations in italics and the conclusions above be supported by the Committee and communicated to Environment Canterbury for their consideration and implementation in June 2004.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For discussion.