

5. CITYWIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORT PRIORITY PLAN

Officer responsible Manager, Transport and City Streets	Author Rob Woods, Transport Planner Public Transport and Sustainability, DDI 941-8060
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The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's feedback on the draft citywide public transport priority plan. This plan has been developed using criteria commented on by Community Boards, which were approved by the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee and the Council at its May 2004 meeting.

BACKGROUND

The draft citywide public transport priority plan (copies will be provided to Board members prior to the meeting) has been prepared as a first step towards the development of public transport priority measures across the city, the aim of which is to provide a more convenient metro public transport system with the efficiency and reliability necessary to encourage more people to make more bus trips in preference to car trips. As the Board will know from previous reports, this is a key objective of the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy Update 2003, which was adopted by the Council and Environment Canterbury in July 2003, following consultation with each Community Board.

The purpose of the citywide plan is to develop a list of corridors with identified unreliability and delay problems, and then place them in a priority order using the criteria already adopted by the Council.

It is **not** the purpose of the plan to identify options (or specific proposals) on each of the corridors. This will follow adoption of the plan, at which stage options will be developed in association with people likely to be affected or to have an interest in the particular areas.

KEY POINTS IN THE PLAN

Board members will see from the circulated plan that the three corridors proposed for development and introduction first are:

- Belfast to/from the Bus Exchange, via Papanui Road
- Princess Margaret Hospital to/from the Bus Exchange, via Colombo Street
- Queenspark to/from the Bus Exchange, via New Brighton Road

The proposed fourth placed corridor is Hornby Mall to/from the Bus Exchange, via Riccarton Road. This corridor had been placed second on the list following a review of bus performance in terms of unreliability and delay, and also the potential benefit to others criteria (see section 1.4 of the plan). However, with a significant network improvement at the Riccarton / Clarence / Straven intersection due for construction this financial year, it is the staff recommendation that for sound practical and engineering reasons, the development of bus priority measures in this area be deferred.

The Board will be most interested in the Queenspark to/from the Bus Exchange, via New Brighton Road corridor, as the sections of this corridor south of North Avon Road fall within the Board's boundaries (strategic planning issues west of Barbadoes Street and roading delegations west of Madras Street are the responsibility of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee –ST&UC).

An explanation of the priority placing of the Sumner to/from the Exchange corridor (the other corridor that will be of interest to the Board) is included in the plan, however the following sections provide a summary of the justification for the proposed selection of the Queenspark corridor, which it is proposed be developed and implemented towards June 2006.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRIORITY PLACING OF QUEENS PARK TO/FROM THE EXCHANGE CORRIDOR

In terms of the delay and unreliability criteria adopted by the Council in May 2004, as well as the potential to benefit others criteria, this corridor came fourth in priority order. However, following consideration of other factors (identified above and discussed in detail in section 3.4.3 of the plan), this corridor ranked third on the final proposed priority order of corridors for development. Each of the criteria is discussed below for this corridor.

Unreliability and Delay

Board members will see in the table on page 13 of the circulated plan that in terms of unreliability and excess bus to car travel time (delay), this corridor ranks just outside the top three corridors overall. Looking first at the unreliability calculations, it comes fifth and fourth of the eight corridors (columns one and three) but by then looking at the excess travel time rankings (fourth and second), one can see there is a tendency and weight of argument towards the higher fourth place. This placing can be confirmed by looking at the next higher and lower placed corridors. The next higher placing is the Hornby corridor, which tends towards second or third ranking by unreliability, with a tendency downwards towards third place on excess travel time rankings. The next lower placed corridor is the New Brighton corridor, via Pages Road, which ranks fourth and fifth by unreliability, with a tendency to the fifth place based on excess travel time.

Potential Benefits to Others

The potential for this corridor to benefit others is high. The potential to improve pedestrian facilities is ranked high in each of the sections of this corridor, excepting the central city section between the exchange and the intersection of Gloucester Street and Fitzgerald Avenue. This is in common with all other central city corridor sections where the grid based road network layout provides regular crossing opportunities at regular intervals. The remaining sections have infrequent signalised intersections that mean pedestrians must seek gaps in the traffic flow and this is particularly the case along Whitmore Street and Hills Road and also along sections of New Brighton Road east of the Palms.

The section of corridor between Wainoni / New Brighton Road and Fitzgerald Avenue is rated highly for its potential to improve the level of service to cycling. This is because there is currently an absence of dedicated facilities along most of this section (some of which is in the capital works programme and categorised as medium priority) and presents a medium to high combination of perceived danger and exposure.

Though the good ranking of this corridor against the benefit to others criteria did not elevate this corridor's position in the overall priority list, it does reinforce the final recommendation that this corridor justifies inclusion in the top three.

Other Factors

Other factors that were considered for this corridor included the level of integration possible with the existing five year capital works programme and the effect on adjacent land uses, commented on below.

Five year capital works programme

This corridor offers some good potential to co-ordinate with other Council capital streets projects identified in the five year plan.

These include a \$1.9 million street renewal project for Bower Avenue and \$116,000 of cycle facilities (mentioned above) on New Brighton Road (Avondale Road to Wainoni Road).

Effect on adjacent land uses

As outlined in the citywide plan, primarily the concerns in this respect will be on the potential loss of on-street parking. Until options are developed to resolve the unreliability and delay issues identified on corridors, it is difficult to comment on the local and specific effects of bus priority schemes on adjacent land uses to any level of detail. The actual effects will depend on the type of measure required and the availability of, or potential for, nearby alternatives.

Each of the corridors have similar ranges of adjacent land uses including residential and commercial purposes, in the central city and in the suburbs. It would be fair to say that whichever corridors are first developed, there will be concerns over potential effects such as loss of on-street parking. The important issue in such cases is to establish the actual level and type of use of on-street parking supply and to reconcile this with local land owners and users needs within design options that also achieve public transport objectives.

Summary

Within the context of unreliability, delay and bus frequency, as well as potential for improvements to cycling and walking, this corridor was placed fourth on the priority list for bus priority treatments. In consideration of other factors though, it is recommended to defer development of the second placed corridor (Hornby to/from the Bus Exchange, via Riccarton Road) pending the completion and 'bedding in' of a key intersection improvement, which stands to improve traffic flow and reduce delay in the area.

This changes the priority order of corridors, bringing the Queenspark to/from the Bus Exchange into third place, behind the first placed Belfast via Papanui Road and second placed Princess Margaret Hospital via Colombo Street corridors.

OTHER KEY CITYWIDE PLAN ISSUES

The draft citywide plan also covers the important issue of enforcement. This is important to maintain the benefits of any bus priority scheme, as well as to ensure the safety of other road users.

Enforcement is primarily a key requirement for bus lanes and should these be developed through the consultation and option development process at the next stage, then it is important that they be enforced appropriately.

The draft plan recommends a direction that allows staff to undertake planning for Council enforcement officers to be employed in the enforcement of bus priority measures. This will involve working with central government and the Police to obtain the necessary warrants and delegations of authority for the Council to enforce bus lane moving vehicle violations (currently the Council can only enforce stationary vehicle offences such as parking in a bus lane).

CONCLUSION

This report provides an overview of the draft citywide public transport priority plan and explains the reasons why the Queenspark to/from the Bus Exchange, via New Brighton Road corridor is proposed as one of the first three corridors to be developed for bus priority treatment. The section of this corridor south of North Avon Road comprising Whitmore Street, Fitzgerald Avenue, Gloucester Street and Colombo Street falls within the Community Board's boundaries.

This report and the circulated draft plan outline that the development of this corridor has potential to provide benefits to the city in terms of improved reliability and travel time of buses, as well as have potential benefit to other road users and other factors like integration with existing capital works projects. This conclusion has been reached using recently Council-adopted criteria.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Board provide its feedback to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee on the draft citywide public transport priority plan.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the recommendation be adopted.