

3. CITYWIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORT PRIORITY PLAN

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The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's feedback on the draft Citywide Public Transport Priority Plan.

At the 22 July 2004 meeting of the Board's Transport and Roding Committee, this matter was discussed by the members present and Rob Woods.

As the Committee had not received the draft Citywide Public Transport Priority Plan document, the Committee **agreed** to put this matter directly to today's meeting for consideration by all members. **The plan has now been received and has been circulated separately to members.**

Rob Woods is a Transport Planner with the Council's Transport and City Streets Unit, and will be present at today's meeting to discuss the document with members.

BACKGROUND

The draft Citywide Public Transport Priority Plan (copies will be provided to committee 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 being 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 deference 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. The Council has a commitment, through the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy Update 2003, to implement the first 3 bus priority corridors by June 2006.

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 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 and other proposals in the coming years, it is the staff recommendation that the development of bus priority measures be deferred to recognise and for integration with these other projects.

The improvements are intended to increase capacity at the intersection and will potentially improve traffic flows along Riccarton Road (and Clarence and Straven) reducing approach queues and delays to buses. It is recommended that bus priority measures be delayed until the intersection works are complete and the new traffic flows and characteristics have 'bedded in'. At that time, a new bus performance analysis can be undertaken, to assess whether the corridor still meets the Council adopted criteria, and occupies a position of sufficient priority alongside other corridors, to justify development of bus priority measures.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRIORITY PLACING OF HORNBY TO/FROM THE EXCHANGE

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 second to the Belfast to/from Exchange, via Papanui Road corridor. In terms of the complete analysis and the remaining criteria however, it is recommended that the corridor be placed fourth. This is discussed below.

Unreliability and Delay

Board members will see in the table on page 13 of the circulated plan that it ranks highly in terms of unreliability, with lower rankings (albeit with marginal differences between corridors) for bus to car excess travel time. In terms of reliability the sections making up the corridor vary between highly and marginally unreliable. For example, trips between the hospital and the exchange are very reliable (being a short section), but trips west of the hospital start to become unreliable (18% to 100% of trips more than 3 or more minutes early or late). This becomes particularly acute for outbound trips west of the hospital in the evening peak hour.

Potential Benefits to Others

The potential for this corridor to benefit others is high. In particular the section between Deans Avenue and Church Corner has high potential. This is because the absence of dedicated pedestrian facilities on some sections (only one between Clyde Road and Matipo Street – a distance of 750 metres) often means pedestrians have difficulty negotiating gaps in the high traffic volumes.

The potential to improve cycling is also high along this section and there are capital projects planned in the next five years for a school bubble at Riccarton High and facilities between Deans Avenue and Mandeville Street. These are discussed in section 3.4.3 of the plan. There is an absence of dedicated cycle facilities along Riccarton Road. The Riccarton Road Traffic Management and Riccarton/Clarence/Straven road network improvement schemes are also in the five year capital works programme and this is also discussed in section 3.4.3 of the plan.

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

The key capital project that had an effect on the priority order of the corridors justifying a change to the priority list was the Riccarton/Clarence/Straven intersection improvement on Riccarton Road which has been in the capital programme for a number of years. There are also works happening now associated with the Westfield Riccarton mall redevelopment close by that could influence a change to traffic flow in the area. The intersection works aim to improve capacity and reduce queuing on the approaches to this intersection, which it is possible may reduce the unreliability and delay of this corridor, at least on the sections approaching Riccarton Mall. This may (or may not) lower the priority of this whole corridor relative to others, when re-analysed following completion of the works.

It is recommended that the development of this corridor in terms of bus priority measures be deferred to a time when the intersection improvements at the Riccarton/Clarence/Straven intersection and the works associated with the mall redevelopment are complete. Shortly after, traffic flows will have settled to a predictable and measurable level at which to re-measure the bus performance indicators of unreliability and delay as outlined in section 3.4.1 of the circulated plan.

Another associated body of work on this corridor is the Riccarton Road Traffic Management scheme, which has also been identified in the five year capital programme for a number of years. It would make sense to take account of this scheme with any bus priority scheme, pending resolution of the issues mentioned above.

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 the eight 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, the Hornby Mall to/from the Exchange, via Riccarton Road corridor was placed second on the priority list for bus priority treatments.

There are however practical and sound engineering reasons that warrant this corridor being deferred until such a time as the anticipated improvements to traffic flow to the Riccarton/Clarence/Straven intersection come into effect, and when the levels of unreliability and delay can be re-appraised and compared again to other corridors in the city.

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

The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the draft Citywide Public Transport Priority Plan and to explain the reasons why the Hornby Mall to/from the Exchange, via Riccarton Road corridor is proposed to be ranked fourth for bus priority treatment in the city.

This report and the circulated draft plan outline that whilst this corridor stands to provide the second most benefit to the city in terms of improved reliability and bus travel time relative to the car, as well as potential benefit to other users and other factors like integration with existing capital works projects, there is good reason not to proceed with the development of bus priority measures until completion of local projects that have a bearing on the performance of the corridor. This conclusion has been reached using recently Council-adopted criteria.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Riccarton/Wigram traffic sub-committee provide its feedback to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee on the draft citywide public transport priority plan.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Community Board receive the draft Citywide Public Transport Priority Plan and provide feedback to the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee.