

4. PASSENGER TRANSPORT PRIORITY MEASURES

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of progress on the targets for public transport priority measures contained within the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy, which was adopted by the Council in July 2003. The Board's feedback is also invited on proposed content of the city-wide plan and criteria to identify and prioritise corridors for priority treatment.

INTRODUCTION

In May 2003, the contents of a proposed update to the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy (CPPTS) were presented to the Board for their information and comment. Following this, the strategy was adopted in July 2003 by both the City Council and Environment Canterbury. This updated strategy sets targets for both Councils to improve public transport services so that more people use the system and contribute to reduced growth in congestion and its associated undesirable effects. This is consistent with the draft Metropolitan Christchurch Transport Statement (MCTS), which is currently out for public consultation alongside the Council's Long Term Community Plan.

The MCTS is to be the overarching transport policy document that gives Council activities direction towards achieving the long-term vision of a transport system that "supports a quality of life second to none". It will also guide the Council in its activities to avoid the problems faced by maintaining the current approach to transport planning.

One target in the CPPTS is the adoption by Council, by June 2004, of a city-wide public transport priority plan, setting out plans for development, introduction and enforcement of bus priority measures; so that bus priority measures are implemented on three transport corridors by June 2006.

PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CITY-WIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORT PRIORITY PLAN

Since adoption of the CPPTS in July 2003, staff have undertaken the following work towards the production of a city-wide plan:

- Meeting officers of Auckland City Council, Wellington City Council and North Shore City Council to benefit from their knowledge, approach and experience in the development, introduction and enforcement of public transport priority measures.
- Review of best practice overseas.
- A scoping exercise of the delays and issues within the Christchurch public passenger transport system, using the real time information database.
- Development of criteria and a rationale for the identification and prioritisation of potential public transport priority locations.
- Investigation of the legislative background to the enforcement of public transport priority measures and options for the Council to pursue.

This preliminary work now requires feedback from community boards and the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee in order to move forward. The following sections discuss recommended criteria for the selection and prioritisation of corridors for priority measures.

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITISING CORRIDORS

It is necessary to use criteria and a rationale to identify and prioritise locations for inclusion within the city-wide plan. The following criteria and rationale are recommended based on best practise elsewhere in New Zealand and overseas, and which are well suited to Christchurch. They appear in order of importance, with trigger points above which intervention should be considered.

Unreliability

This is widely accepted as the number one reason why people do not choose to take public transport and is simply a measure of the variability of the arrival time of the bus at a given point. High priority should be given to locations that have been identified as causes of high unreliability, relative to their performance in uncongested conditions. Highest priority should be given to locations served by a number of bus routes, and then the number of passengers. Intervention should be considered on sections of route causing arrivals to vary by three minutes or more from their schedule (market research has shown that this is the threshold at which passengers consider a bus to be "late").

Delay

This is also important as it is a factor in the relative journey times of public transport to cars and another reason why people (notably car drivers and passengers) choose not to take public transport. High priority should be given to locations that cause the most delay to services, and then to passengers. Intervention should be considered at locations causing delay to services which result in their mean journey times between key origins and destinations exceeding 125% that of a car (this is a specific target in the CPPTS).

Benefit to Others

High priority should be given to locations where there is good potential to improve levels of service to other road users. For example, this could be along a corridor without specific cycle facilities where the provision of an appropriate mixed use cycle/public transport lane would benefit a significant number of cyclists. Alternatively, it could be at a location with poor pedestrian facilities, where new bus signals enable a pedestrian crossing phase to be incorporated.

Other Factors

As with any new traffic management scheme, other factors should be taken into account (given the level of detail that will be known at the early planning stage). For example, the approximate ratio of costs and benefits should be taken into account in developing a prioritised list of sites. Issues such as the effects on road safety, practicality, impact on adjacent land uses, ongoing maintenance and operational liabilities as well as integration within the existing capital projects programme should also be considered in recommending priority locations.

PROPOSED CONTENTS OF THE CITY-WIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORT PRIORITY PLAN

It is proposed that the following be included in the city-wide plan for Council adoption.

1. Background and objectives

The purpose of this section will be to briefly set public transport priority within the context of other Council, regional and national transport strategy documents, its importance to the overall public passenger transport system, the implications of a "business as usual" or "do minimum" approach and the objectives of providing priority for public transport.

2. Criteria and priority locations

This section will describe the criteria used in the identification of locations (as discussed above) and identify their relative priority. These will be city-wide locations that present significant delays and unreliability, and that preferably have a potential to provide tangible benefits to other road users in addition to public transport passengers.

3. Conceptual approach and outline costs

For each corridor, a conceptual approach to achieving the public transport priority objectives to form a starting point for the identification of options and the consultation process, following adoption of the plan.

4. Enforcement Concepts

This section will discuss appropriate types and levels of Council enforcement that should be planned for, to ensure that if and when city-wide schemes are implemented, they operate effectively and deliver the intended levels of priority to public transport.

5. Recommendations

Linked to the CPPTS targets, this should recommend the three highest priority corridors for development. It should also outline a commitment to appropriate and effective enforcement (by the Council if preferred).

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

It is recommended that the proposed contents of the city-wide plan and the criteria to identify and prioritise locations for public transport priority measures be approved by the Board and then recommended for adoption by the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee. This will provide a clear direction for staff to follow in preparing the City-wide Public Transport Priority Plan.

CONCLUSION

This report seeks the Board's feedback on proposals for criteria and a rationale to identify and prioritise corridors for public transport priority measures. It also seeks the views of the Board on the proposed contents of the City-wide Public Transport Priority Plan, which is a target of the recently updated CPPTS.

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Board express its support for the proposed criteria and rationale to identify and prioritise corridors for public transport priority measures.
 2. That the Board express its support for the proposed contents of the City-wide Public Transport Priority Plan.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: For discussion.