

5. SUBURBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE CRITERIA



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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's feedback on certain proposed criteria to identify locations for the development of three suburban bus interchanges. A further report will then present an analysis of potential locations using these criteria (once approved by the Council) and a request for Community Board comment on a recommendation of the three locations for scheme development, prior to seeking a resolution of such from the Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The development of suburban interchanges are integral to achieving the Council's vision and goals for public transport as set out in its Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy. In this Strategy, the Council has a target for the adoption of a plan identifying locations of interchanges and construction of three interchanges by June 2006.
3. In December 2005 staff conducted a seminar for the Council and Community Boards on the role of interchanges and highlighted the particular functions of them in Christchurch (**Attachment 1**). The seminar outlined the aim of achieving positive community outcomes through transport improvements that encourage increased suburban transfer between services forming the metro network and also between public transport and other modes of travel. This is currently an under-utilised aspect of the system because despite the metro services being largely in place for people to move around the network, there are not the appropriate passenger interchange facilities at key points in the network to encourage transfers. By encouraging people to maximise the flexibility of the system by interchanging between services and modes, they will be able to make better use of the metro system to access a wider range of destinations, rather than be limited to just a single bus trip. This will improve the convenience of the system to present customers whilst also allowing new customers to take advantage of an improved metro system as the overall level of service becomes more aligned with their travel requirements and expectations.
4. The success of suburban interchanges depends upon improvements in a number of key areas. These improvements may be considered the key objectives for the development of the interchanges and comprise:
 - the provision of quality interchange passenger facilities at the right locations
 - appropriate passenger services to facilitate interchange
 - the provision of good access and arrangements for other modes
 - strong ongoing marketing and promotion of the facility once it is up and running.
5. Success in these areas will require the Council to engage with other key stakeholders, such as Environment Canterbury, local businesses and the surrounding local communities.
6. In order to identify a fair and technically robust process for selecting the first three interchange sites, a number of different criteria options were considered. These comprised site selection by:
 - (a) geographical spread.
 - (b) existing passenger demand.
 - (c) existing level of passenger services.
 - (d) surrounding population catchment.
 - (e) importance of the suburban centre in comparison to other centres.
 - (f) status of the centre within the metro network.
 - (g) land availability and complexity of procurement.

- (h) traffic management implications and impacts on other road users.
 - (i) extent of changes required to the existing metro services and for existing passengers.
 - (j) impacts on neighbouring land owners and uses.
 - (k) project cost.
 - (l) time to complete and time implications with other projects.
7. Having assessed these options it is recommended that criteria (d) to (l) form the criteria for selecting interchange sites as these are the most important aspects to achieving positive outcomes on the aims and objectives of the project. Criteria (d) to (f) cover matters of site significance, (g) to (j) cover matters of project feasibility and criteria (k) and (l) cover issues of project deliverability. Whilst criteria (a) to (c) qualify as equitable in one way or another they would not have any supporting technical rationale to indicate they would be the best opportunities for the Council to take. If however assessments using (d) to (l) result in equal ratings of sites, (a) to (c) could be used to separate them by a second tier assessment.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8. Funding for interchanges was first identified through adoption of the Metropolitan Christchurch Transport Statement Stage 1 in December 2003. Budgets for suburban interchanges are currently identified in the Council's current draft LTCCP 2006/16.

BACKGROUND ON SUBURBAN INTERCHANGES

9. The development of three suburban interchanges by June 2006 is a City Council target of the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy. It sits amongst a range of other targets for both the City Council and Environment Canterbury, emphasising the importance of ongoing and combined improvements in passenger services and infrastructure to achieve the vision set out in the Strategy.
10. Suburban interchanges aim to encourage people to transfer between different metro services and between metro public transport and other modes. With the availability of an urban network of convenient services and attractive interchanges, people will increasingly be able to move efficiently within it, making public transport a convenient alternative to most private car journeys. Interchange is a concept where customers can hop on and off different routes to reach their destination, as well as to join and leave the system via another mode. This will occur at its most optimal when the services have sufficient coverage and are of an appropriate cost, reliability and frequency to make their use realistic, supported by passenger interchange facilities that provide attractive surroundings of sufficient quality and functionality to make interchanging easy and convenient. The bus exchange is an excellent example of such a facility (albeit on a larger scale).
11. Interchanges and the supporting passenger services must therefore support the needs of people moving efficiently within a network and must also recognise where and how customers choose to join and leave the network (whether it be on foot, by bike or other mode¹) and what other business they may undertake on the way, such as shopping, entertainment, leisure or personal business. Interchanges thus operate on a number of levels, with the locations that will deliver the greatest benefits being those that can most effectively deliver the interchange concept in an area with a high passenger catchment. Criteria are needed to identify the extent to which any given location is likely to perform on these fronts and therefore their priority in terms of achieving the Council's aims and objectives.

AIMS

12. The Council works towards the achievement of a number of Community Outcomes, some of which relate directly to improvements in the transport system. These include "An attractive and well designed city", "A safe city", "A city of people who value and protect the natural environment" and "A prosperous city". Contributions to these Community Outcomes through transport improvements should be recognised as an important aim of the interchanges project. To achieve these outcomes interchanges aim to encourage more trips by public transport and less by private car by encouraging transfer between metro services and also between metro and other modes of arrival and departure from the interchange. In this way better use will be made of the existing road network, improving its efficiency and safety and making higher value road trips such as freight movement faster and more reliable.

OBJECTIVES

13. From these high level aims arise certain specific project objectives. The achievement of these objectives depend largely upon addressing the differences between metro and private transport in terms of time, cost, coverage, safety, image and accessibility (being the main drivers of mode choice). The project objectives are outlined below.
14. The first objective is to develop a suitable facility at the right location to encourage people to travel to a defined point in the network (via their chosen mode) where they can then transfer to another mode or service to get to their destination (or to another interchange). This infrastructure can impact upon a persons choice of travel mode by addressing common perceptions of security, image, journey time and accessibility. Feelings of security will be improved through the provision of a comfortable interchange environment, whilst its design and branding will determine its image. The way in which the facility allows the metro services to interact with the passengers (for example all services coming together at one point) also impacts upon journey time, safety and accessibility.

¹ Park 'n' ride is a form of 'interchange' not suited to the urban environment - which is the context for these bus interchanges. P&R is effective generally only on the edge of an urban area and along the line of a major high volume radial corridor such as a motorway, where car journeys can be readily intercepted. Typically, features of P&R include substantial managed free parking areas, low cost high frequency express services direct to the destination, supported by dedicated bus priority facilities. Parking controls in the urban centre, such as time limits, limited availability and price increases are also used to encourage transfer from the car at the P&R station. Park 'n' ride is a separately identified project in the Public Passenger Transport Strategy.

15. Probably as important as providing good infrastructure, is the need to provide the correct services to support the interchange concept. Attention in the areas of time, cost, coverage, image and accessibility will deliver this. Particularly essential are regular local services to get passengers to their interchange, fast and frequent links between interchanges to allow efficient movement within the network, quality buses that are clean with plenty of seats and attractive and accessible bus stops.
16. Recognising that passengers may make their way to and from the interchange using another mode, an objective should include encouragement of these types of journeys by reviewing access arrangements (for example pedestrian crossing facilities and cycle facilities on approach routes) and facilities at the interchange itself like secure cycle parking and secure storage facilities.
17. A final and often under-utilised objective for the project should be to actively inform, educate and promote interchanges before, during and after their development to ensure the maximum number of people are attracted to the facility and services. Only if people within the catchment of the interchange are aware of their options will they make use of them. Research in travel behaviour shows that changes in mode choice occur gradually and over a period of time. It is therefore important to undertake information and promotion work as part of an ongoing marketing campaign so that as people's needs and motivations change, they are regularly reminded of the alternatives available.

OPTIONS

18. A number of criteria were considered as a way to develop a priority list of sites for development. These were as follows:
 - (a) geographical spread.
 - (b) existing passenger demand.
 - (c) existing level of passenger services.
 - (d) surrounding population catchment.
 - (e) importance of the suburban centre in comparison to other centres.
 - (f) status of the centre within the metro network.
 - (g) land availability and complexity of procurement.
 - (h) traffic management implications and impacts on other road users.
 - (i) extent of changes required to the existing metro services and for existing passengers.
 - (j) impacts on neighbouring land owners and uses.
 - (k) project cost.
 - (l) time to complete and time implications with other projects.

PREFERRED OPTION

19. Having considered each criteria and the aims and objectives of the project, it is recommended that criteria (d) to (l) form the criteria to prioritise a list of interchange locations. Criteria (d) to (f) cover matters of site significance, (g) to (j) cover matters of project feasibility and criteria (k) and (l) cover issues of project deliverability. This option reflects the significance of a location in the context of achieving high level Council aims and project objectives whilst it also recognises practical matters such as the availability of appropriate land and programming with other works².

Using these criteria will also likely achieve the equity offered by the remaining options which could be employed if necessary to split options rated equally using the proposed criteria.

² The development of interchanges within LTCCP 2006/16 budgets is an underlying assumption.

20. The following table outlines the proposed criteria recommended for use and how these criteria will be measured. Each criteria will receive equal weighting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

- (a) Notes the aims and objectives of the project.
- (b) Expresses its support for the proposed criteria for the development of a priority list of interchange locations. These being:
 - (i) surrounding population catchment.
 - (ii) importance of the suburban centre in comparison to other centres.
 - (iii) status of the centre within the metro network.
 - (iv) land availability and complexity of procurement.
 - (v) traffic management implications and impacts on other road users.
 - (iv) extent of changes required to the existing metro services and for existing passengers.
 - (vii) impacts on neighbouring land owners and uses.
 - (viii) project cost.
 - (ix) time to complete and time implications with other projects.
- (c) Requests that staff report back to the Community Board with the proposed interchange location priority list using these criteria (once they are adopted by Council), prior to a resolution being sought by Council for the development of the first three suburban interchange locations.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

For discussion.