

6. 1999/2000 PASSENGER TRANSPORT REGIONAL PROGRAMME – CHRISTCHURCH

INTRODUCTION

In mid-1998 the Canterbury Regional Council and the Christchurch City Council adopted the jointly developed passenger transport strategy for Christchurch (“*Our Future Our Choice*”). This strategy has set out a long-term vision for passenger transport in the city, and has focused on the achievement of a number of outcomes relating to service provision and patronage growth. The priorities identified in this process are:

- Improved frequency of services
- Cross-town routes
- Faster services
- Improved infrastructure, especially bus shelters
- Improved information systems
- Better quality and more appropriate buses.

OUTCOMES

The Council’s draft annual plan for 1999/2000 sets out the outputs and outcomes required for the coming year in order to maintain the momentum towards the longer term goals outlined in *Our Future Our Choice*. Two of the most challenging outcomes are:

- System patronage of 9.8 million (10% growth from the 1997/98 baseline)
- Commuter public transport travel time on key corridors reduced from 200% to 190% of car travel time.

The Regional Council’s role in meeting these outcomes will be through new services, in particular the ring route (1st stage), express services down key arterial routes, improved information systems, and improved ticketing systems. The City Council’s role will be through the commitments outlined in *Our Future Our Choice*, including 30-80 new shelters and bus stop infrastructure, bus priority developments and trials, and development of more passenger transport sensitive parking policies.

FUNDING COMMITMENTS

Consistent with the outcomes desired in *Our Future Our Choice* the Regional Council, through its long-term financial strategy, has committed to a substantial re-investment in the passenger transport system over the next nine years. Expenditure is expected to double from 1998 to 2008.

The Regional Council, through its Regional Programme, is budgeting for \$15.3m for passenger transport services in the next financial year for the greater Christchurch area, an increase of over \$3m from the current year. This large increase reflects a number of new initiatives, as well as a number of one-off initiatives. These are:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • First stage of the ring route, beginning July 1999 | \$0.8m (gross) |
| • Substantial upgrade of Sumner service, beginning Sept 1999 | \$0.8m (est) |
| • CANride rebranding/imaging and marketing | \$0.85m (one off) |
| • Ticketing machine re-investments | \$0.53m (one off) |

In addition there will be a number of lower cost, incremental improvements made to existing services including increased frequency, express services, and bus reinvestment. Service contracts contributing almost half of the trips and passengers carried in Christchurch will be renewed over the coming 12 months.

Further, the Regional Programme for 1999/2000 includes a request from Christchurch City Council for a large increase in the provision of bus shelters in Christchurch:

Bus shelters and infrastructure \$0.6m.

The Regional Council has planned for most of the additional \$3m to be sourced from increased separate passenger transport rates in Christchurch City, and from reserves. Transfund New Zealand have notified that the funding available for passenger transport services from the national roading fund is capped in aggregate at the current year's amount. While new services may receive additional funding through the "alternatives to roading" output class if they can show sufficient road user benefits, we expect to be receiving about the same level of funding overall as the current year.

CONCLUSIONS

Funding for 1999/2000 represents a very substantial commitment on the part of the Regional Council to work towards the achievement of the goals and objectives set out in *Our Future Our Choice*. There are substantial risks in this commitment. Funding from the national level is capped and uncertain for future years, especially in light of road reform uncertainties. Achievement of the immediate outcome targets for 1999/2000 and beyond represent a considerable challenge. This is particularly so when the cost of owning and operating motor cars has rarely been cheaper and there is little in the way of pricing signals or other policies to discourage inappropriate car usage. There will be a greater need than ever to ensure that the policies of the Regional Council and the City Council are consistent and integrated, and that they are mutually supporting the goals and objectives set out in *Our Future Our Choice*.

Report prepared by Ian McChesney, Energy and Transport Planning Manager.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For discussion.