



**TWO YEAR REPORT BACK ON**

**OUR FUTURE- OUR CHOICE**

**The Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy**

**July 2000**

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**INTRODUCTION**

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It is two years since the Canterbury Regional Council and the Christchurch City Council approved the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport Strategy. The approval came after 18 months of development, which included considerable technical research and analysis, extensive public consultation, and regular input and guidance from a Community Advisory Group formed to assist the process.

The consultation process and advisory group input provided an overwhelming community endorsement to improve the level and quality of public transport in the city. The final strategy document reflected this community mood. It set out a number of short and long term targets for patronage growth and improvements in the bus system, while also laying out a comprehensive programme of work to June 2000 and a series of further work and investigations to 2003.

The strategy also led to the Canterbury Regional Council setting in place a plan to double the public expenditure in passenger transport from 1998-2008 in order to support the goals and objectives of the strategy.

The following report sets out the targets and actions specified in the strategy with comments on progress towards their achievement.

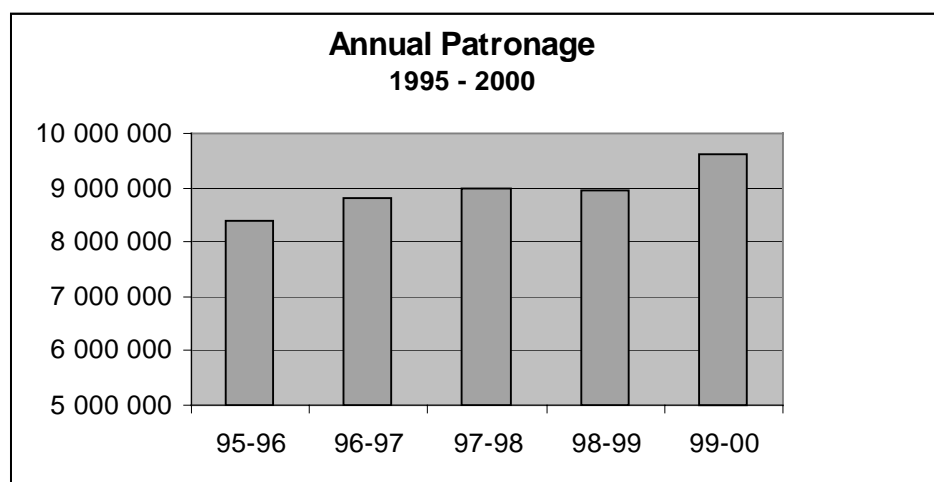
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## PROGRESS TOWARDS TARGETS

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### 1. Patronage

Christchurch buses carried 9,560,000 passengers in the 1999/2000 financial year up 7%, 620,000 trips on last year. A target of 7.5% annual patronage growth was set for the strategy. There was however no patronage growth in the preceding 1998/1999 financial year due in part to the local economic down turn at that time.



We will not know until the 2001 census what change in the proportion of total trips by public transport has occurred. In 1996 public transport accounted for 3% of total trips with the strategy setting a target of 4-5%.

Per capita trips by public transport is now estimated to be at 28 trips per person up from 26 per person in 1997.

### 2. 2000 Bus User Survey

Results of the annual Bus User Survey, which interviews a statistical sample of 500 bus passengers, gave the following key findings:

#### Overall Service Rating

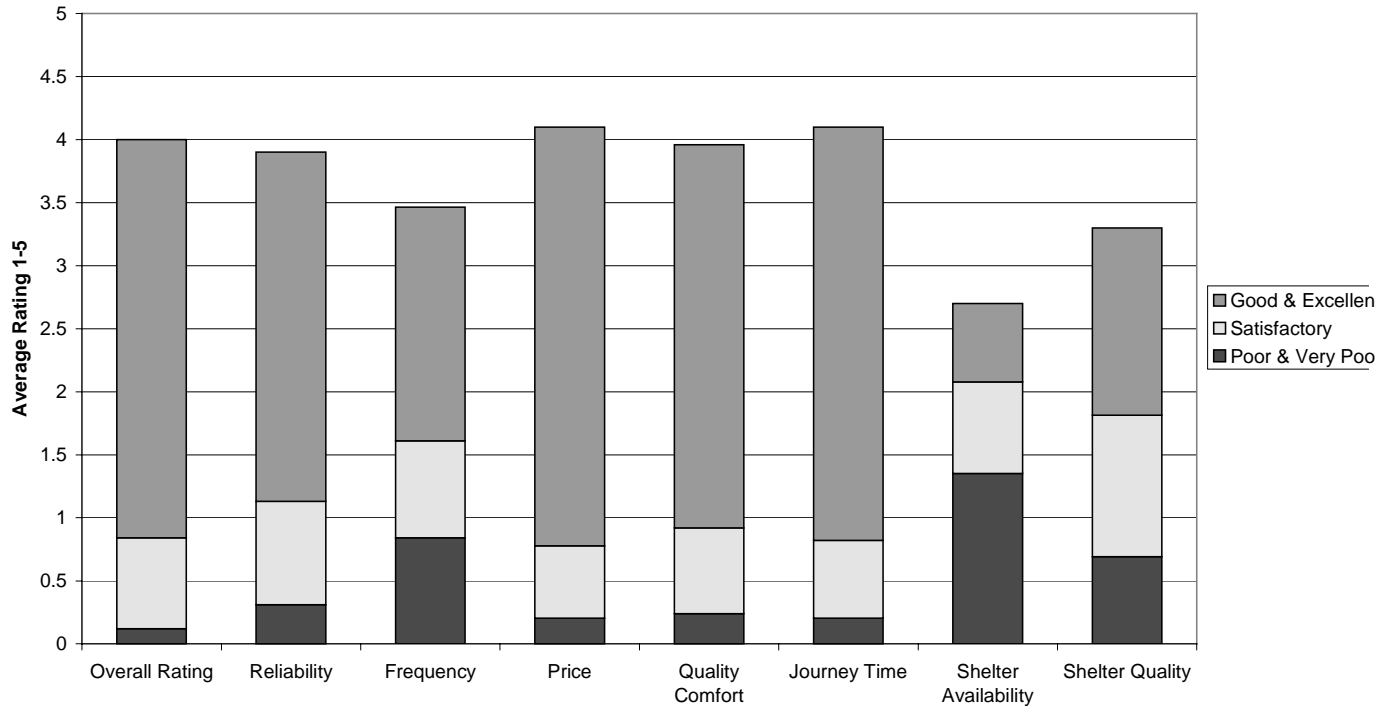
- Some polarisation of passenger perception of the system has occurred with more users rating the system as excellent and more rating the system as only satisfactory.

Service Rating	Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
1999	1%	0%	11%	71%	18%
2000	1%	2%	18%	53%	27%

#### Specific Service Ratings

The average score for most aspects of the bus service was around four out of five. The two specific areas that stand out are the ratings for bus shelter availability and bus shelter quality. This year was the first in which passengers were surveyed on shelters. Bus shelter availability is significant in being the only area where half of respondents (50%) gave a poor or very poor rating.

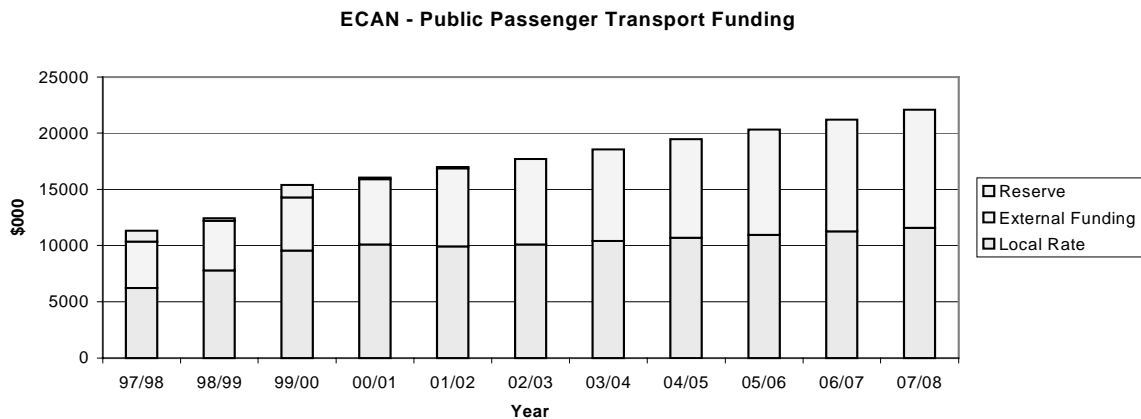
### 2000 Bus User Survey Bus Service Ratings



Service Rating	Reliability	Frequency	Price	Quality Comfort	Journey Time	Shelter Availability	Shelter Quality
1999	4	3.8	4	3.9	4	-	-
2000	3.9	3.5	4.1	4	4.1	2.7	3.3

### 3. Passenger Transport Investment

The following graph outlines the projected investment in passenger transport by Environment Canterbury to 2008.



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## PASSENGER TRANSPORT STRATEGY - BY JUNE 2000

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The following list outlines the Passenger Transport Strategy targets that the two Councils committed to achieving by June 2000 with achievements to date

### 1. **Express Routes (ECAN)**

*"Introduce express routes on 6-10 existing routes, introduce 3-4 limited stop routes if and where appropriate."*

Peak time express trips now operate on the New Brighton and Lincoln routes while Sumner now has an all day limited stop express route operating via Linwood Avenue. For peak time passengers using these routes the following travel time savings have been observed:

- New Brighton express – 25% time saving  
Regular 5 New Brighton trips take 20 minutes to New Brighton while the express takes 15.
- Lincoln – 14% time saving  
Lincoln University express takes 30 minutes while the all stops direct via Springs Road takes 35 minutes (All stops via Hornby takes 45 minutes).
- Sumner limited stop via Linwood Avenue – 10% time saving  
31 Sumner via Ferry Road takes 45 minutes while the all stops 31 Sumner bus takes 50 minutes.

From November 3 new express services will commence serving Parklands, Queenspark and Lyttelton. Additional express trips are also planned for the 5 New Brighton route from April 2001. Investigations are currently under way to determine what additional express services are required on routes serving the western area of the city.

### 2. **Cross Suburban Ring Route/s (ECAN)**

*"Introduce route/s which meet cross town travel needs to major attractions such as shopping malls, education and employment centres."*

Stage one of the Orbiter route commenced operation in July of 1999 and is now the 7<sup>th</sup> biggest bus route in Christchurch. The full "Orbit" of the city will operate from November 2000.

From November 2000 the first stage of a future cross suburban route from New Brighton across the northern suburbs of the city will commence. This first stage will directly link New Brighton, QEII and The Palms. Planning over the next year will determine the final route through the west of the city to possible destinations such as Merivale, Canterbury University and Riccarton.

### 3. **Faster Ticketing (ECAN)**

*"Introduce the use of faster tickets (e.g. single coins and large discounts on fast boarding passes) to reduce ticketing transaction time."*

Round fares with deeper discounts for faster pre paid fares were introduced in May of this year. The discount for 12 ride tickets was increased from 17% to 25%. Within a month an overall 4% movement to faster pre-pay tickets such as 12 ride tickets and monthly passes had been recorded. Monthly passes and 12 ride tickets are 62% and 41% faster respectively than cash.

A new contactless smart card ticketing system is planned to be introduced from April of next year replacing the current paper based 12 ride tickets and monthly passes. Contactless smart card tickets will be fully integrated between bus companies.

#### 4. **Frequency Increases (ECAN)**

*"Increase frequency during the review of services; investigate frequency increases on existing contracts (e.g. day time frequency to match peak frequency on "trunk" routes); review opportunity for spreading "lumpy" peak services (e.g. two buses at 4:50pm on route 3, 5, 7, etc. could become buses at 4:45 and 4:50pm)."*

By June 2000 there will have been a 10% increase in trips run in Christchurch since the PT Strategy was adopted in 1998, largely resulting from introduction of the new Orbiter and Sumner limited stop routes. By November 2000 there will be a 25% increase in trips, when new bus contracts for the north east of the city commence. This will result from significant increases to daytime bus frequencies on several key routes.

Spreading of "lumpy" peak trips has occurred on services reviewed in 1999, Sumner, Burnside, Bryndwr and Bishopdale. Similar changes have been made to schedules for all bus routes in the north east of the city which will commence in November of this year.

In 1998 there was only one bus route that ran to an "A Route" standard. "A Routes" are bus routes that are frequent with a bus at least every 15 minutes during the whole weekday, direct and have no route branches, similar to The Orbiter.

With the commencement of the Orbiter there were two bus routes operating to the "A Route" standard.

From November 2000 an additional four "A Routes" will be added bringing the total number of "A Routes" to 6. This does not include the Eastern Orbiter which will also run to an "A Route" Standard.

Planning is now underway to increase the frequency of service to the University to a bus every 15 minutes, which would come into effect from April 2001.

#### 5. **Newer Buses (ECAN)**

*"On average 20 new super low floor buses to be introduced per year"*

Since 1997 at least 20 new low floor buses have been added to the Christchurch bus fleet each year bringing the total number of low floor buses to 63 as at June 2000. At least 20 new buses are planned to be introduced in November of 2000 bringing the total number of low floor buses to 83, 60% of the Christchurch bus fleet.

#### 6. **Improved Stop Infrastructure**

##### Shelters (CCC)

*"30-80 new shelters per year; finalise improved shelter design review"*

59 new shelters have been installed since August 1998, with twenty five of these being Adshel advertising shelters. Ten older shelters have been replaced with new and 30 new seats have been installed. A standard shelter design has been agreed with Environment Canterbury, it is a transparent design with grey trim and a green roof.

In November 1999 the City Council introduced two policies. The Bus Stop Location policy sets out a framework for assessing bus stop locations in the city. The policy on Bus Shelters with Advertising provides guidance on location of stops in more sensitive

areas such as local residential streets.

#### Information (ECAN)

*"Develop improved stop information including maps ("you are here") and timetables"*

New style timetables and bus stop poles have been trialed on the Orbiter route, which include information on what routes use the stop, new style timetable strips and also Orbiter route maps.

#### Other Infrastructure (CCC)

*"Develop policy and provision for consistent image, identification, lighting, rubbish bins, seats, "stop names" etc."*

Priority is being given to installing shelters at suburban malls including The Palms and Eastgate. Consistent design of bus stop signs has been introduced with the Shuttle and Orbiter stops.

### **7. Cycle and Ride**

*"Introduce cycle facilities at key bus stops" (CCC)*

The City Council has provided secure cycle stands at several central city parking buildings, to allow cyclists confidence in leaving cycles for extended periods at these facilities and potentially take the remainder of a journey via bus. Investigations are also underway for providing secure cycle storage at Church Corner and Hornby Mall, principally as a facility for people to cycle there and catch the bus to Lincoln. Any cyclist can of course use these stands.

During the planning of the new Bus Exchange in the central city, attention has been given to options for providing cycle stands in the vicinity. There will be a number located in Lichfield Street, and those currently located outside Ballantynes will be relocated to allow for the redevelopment of the footpath space for bus infrastructure. Within the building itself, there has been limited opportunity to provide for cycle stands, although an area under the car park ramps is still under investigation. This area would potentially provide covered secure cycle storage/lockers. It was a requirement in the design of the Bus Exchange that cycles could be walked through the building, in case cycles were one day carried on buses as a general feature.

*"Further investigate trials for bike racks on the bus" (ECAN)*

From November 2000 Lyttelton buses will be required to carry bikes through the Lyttelton tunnel.

### **8. Friendly Driver Program (ECAN)**

*"Support improved driver friendliness"*

Bus companies are now awarded tenders on the basis of a number of company attributes including driver friendliness. It is no longer the lowest cost company which necessarily wins any tender. As result bus companies are now putting more effort into ensuring drivers provide a quality service.

### **9. Improved Image (ECAN)**

*"Identify possible "CANRIDE® 2000" campaign to improve livery and product recognition/legibility; review attractive bus design improvements, e.g. the electric hybrid design"*

A new modern image was trailed for the "Orbiter" service, which uses a purpose designed product brand, instead of the usual bus company brand. The design of the

brand, the buses, bus-stop poles and associated publicity information and timetables were designed as a complete package.

This has proven very successful with recent market research showing the Orbiter now having broken with the conventional image among non-bus users of buses as being “for the poor” and being “transport of last resort”, which conventional services are still associated with.

The City Council Shuttle service is also notable for breaking with the conventional image of buses and being perceived, like the Orbiter, as being “not a bus”.

The issue of system wide bus branding has however been on hold while a number of issues are worked through.

#### **10. Parking Policies (CCC)**

*“Further develop and implement complementary parking policies to support public transport where appropriate”*

Some two-three months ago, the City Council began the development of a city wide parking strategy. Whilst the reasons for producing this strategy were many, one of the key issues to be addressed was listed as the relationship between parking and public transport use. Although difficult to quantify, this relationship was confirmed as important to many people during the recent public consultation stage that sought to identify issues and problems associated with parking. This issue will no doubt significantly influence a number of the resulting policies and projects. The issue of removing roadside parking to allow traffic management opportunities, including priority lanes, was also raised during this consultation. The strategy will be finalised in early 2001.

#### **11. Bus Priority in Traffic (CCC)**

*“Buses to have priority at central city intersections and investigate opportunities along strategic public transport corridors”*

Over time there have been few bus priority measures in Christchurch, which have included facilities such as the (now removed) bus lane at Oxford Terrace/Lichfield Street intersection and more recently the bus early start signals at Cambridge Terrace/Cashel Street intersection. This year a bus/taxi only lane marking at Colombo/Gloucester Streets was introduced using green coloured surfacing. This colouring is intended to reinforce the restricted use of that lane at the intersection.

As a result of problems with buses travelling along Colombo Street last December during the Christmas rush, the City Council undertook to improve the situation for buses. Work has progressed throughout this year, and a number of traffic management measures along Colombo Street will be implemented before the end of the year (see the attached plan). These will involve several turn restrictions (such as no right turns from Colombo Street at Tuam Street, and cars must turn left when exiting Cathedral Square via Colombo Street, onto either Hereford or Gloucester Streets). Also there will be bus/taxi only green lanes marked at certain locations allowing buses to move up to key intersections relatively unimpeded from previous stops.

The City Council is also undertaking a study of key bus route corridors to identify projects that could reduce the variability (and hold ups) in the journey time of major bus services. The outcomes of this study are needed to assist with the possible implementation/reintroduction of through routing on certain services. It is anticipated from recent past experience that this process will not be simple.

## 12. **Introduce Central City Shuttle (CCC)**

*"trial use of Electric/Hybrid buses"*

The central city shuttle service was introduced in December 1998. Currently there are three shuttles operating at ten minute intervals along the 4.2km route. This is a free service, which can carry 1 wheelchair, 20 seated and 20 standing passengers. It has been very popular with approximately 75,000 passengers per month. The City Council is investigating improving the service with an additional shuttle bus and extending the route.

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# PASSENGER TRANSPORT STRATEGY - BY JUNE 2003

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## 1. **Land Use Planning (CCC)**

*"Land use planning is supportive of the public transport system"*

General planning of the city for a consolidated urban form supports the promotion of public transport. With residential expansion the Council encourages pedestrian and cycle links throughout the city as well as integration of subdivision design with public transport.

The Council is encouraging the planning of larger developments to allow for easy access to public transport. There are two recent examples with the "Supa Centa" retail development on Radcliffe Road, Styx, which has a bus stop within the site and at Eastgate Mall where buses pick up passengers from within the car park.

## 2. **Real Time Information (CCC & ECAN)**

*"Trial, develop and provide where appropriate real time information at bus stops to inform patrons when their next bus will arrive"*

One of the project teams set up to work on the new Bus Exchange was tasked with the implementation of a RTI system which will assist operation of The Exchange by organising passengers better in anticipation of the arrival of the bus.

After much work, the City Council has recently let a contract for the implementation of a RTI system, which will have its first stage in place for the opening of the Bus Exchange on 4th November 2000. This first stage will provide RTI to passengers using the Exchange (off-street building and on-street stops). Signs showing how long it is until the next arrival of each service, and at which stop the bus will arrive will provide this information.

The second stage is mainly focussing on the spreading of the system across the remainder of the city during the next two financial years. The aim is to provide RTI signs at all main stops/interchanges across the city as well as at several hundred bus stops. The RTI system will also provide very useful information for the investigation (and operation) of bus priority facilities.

## 3. **Ticketing (ECAN)**

*"Investigate and where appropriate invest in ticketing technology which reduces boarding time (e.g. contactless "Smart Cards")"*

As noted earlier, a smartcard ticketing system is scheduled to be in place across the Christchurch bus system by April 2001. The reason for advancing the timing on this initiative include the need for faster ticketing within the central city interchange, and increased difficulty in remaining with the current ticketing machines which are becoming expensive to maintain and difficult to source.

The earlier starting date also provides the opportunity for reviewing fares, and introducing new fare options.

#### 4. **Rail (CCC & ECAN)**

*“Opportunities for both use of existing rail corridors and introduction of new rail (including light rail), and opportunities with new land use developments”*

No recent studies undertaken. A staff member of Alstom (UK) provided a voluntary review of a Booz-Allen scoping study on Light Rail opportunities for Christchurch while here on holiday during last Christmas.

Watching Auckland developments with interest (including the new TranzRail commuter service between Auckland and Hamilton).

#### 5. **Smaller Buses (ECAN)**

*“On appropriate neighbourhood routes”*

Smaller 30 seat buses are now in use on the Orbiter Bus route. A smaller 30 seat bus has also been specified for use on the St Albans bus route from November 2000. Investigation is underway on the possible use of smaller buses on a shuttle service connecting Aranui with the Palms and New Brighton.

With the opening of the new Bus Exchange and associated bus movement patterns in the central city there is less scope for the use of smaller buses on radial city bus routes. Smaller buses need to be run more often to provide adequate capacity, however there is a limit to how many buses can be run on, for example Colombo Street, without adverse traffic management problems. The option of using larger buses may need to be considered on some busier bus routes.

It is likely that standard 40 seat buses will continue to be used on most radial city bus routes for the foreseeable future with smaller buses used to run cross suburban and community feeder services in the suburbs.

#### 6. **Electric/Hybrid Bus (ECAN)**

*“Opportunities for introduction of “clean green and quiet” technologies (e.g. Sydney Olympic games bus)”*

ECAN has moved to require all new buses meet the Euro 2 emission requirements, install roofline exhausts, and has also sought increased sound proofing of engine bays. However, to date there has been no specification of electric or hybrid drive systems.

Alternative tenders were received for the Orbiter route based on hybrid buses. The benefits of these buses were evaluated with the Council declaring a willingness to pay an additional \$118,000pa over and above the conventional diesel alternative. However, in the end this amount was insufficient to overcome the additional cost penalty of hybrids. Since then the Council has reconsidered the risks associated with hybrid buses and has not been willing to consider the hybrid bus alternative on any contracted services until reliability issues and passenger reaction has been tested through a trial.

Opportunities for trialling hybrid drives and other “greener/quieter” technologies such as LPG are being pursued.

#### 7. **Funding Options (ECAN & CCC)**

*“Including local/regional petrol taxes and parking charges to financially support public transport; review opportunities for CCC transport-riding investment to be targeted toward public transport”*

There has been little progress on alternative funding sources. The priority for staff time has been to focus on the delivery of extra funding promised by the present Government prior to last years' election.

It appears this will delivered through "patronage funding", whereby Transfund will pay various amounts for passengers carried. Environment Canterbury has proposed to Transfund to trial patronage funding, starting 1 July 2000, prior to the introduction of a national scheme.

Developing the case for new funding sources might be possible with the anticipated review of passenger transport legislation later this year.

#### 8. **Park and Ride**

*"Opportunities for facilities throughout Christchurch (CCC) and the other relevant urban areas (ECAN)"*

An initial investigation report was carried out by Booz, Allen and Hamilton in May 1999.

#### 9. **Better Route Coverage (ECAN)**

*"Opportunities will be explored for better servicing existing areas and newly developed areas of our city, including suburban malls."*

The bus network is now being reviewed on a geographic basis. As contracts come up for re-tender in geographic areas of the city the opportunity is being taken to re-assess the route structure. Existing routes are modified to better meet travel demand and where necessary new cross suburban and radial routes planned.

The goal has been to create an integrated network of routes, with transfer points at major suburban malls, which provide convenient access to destinations across the city without the need to travel into the city to change buses. Two classes of routes have been developed which are:

**A Routes** - New high quality core "A Routes", running every 15 minutes on weekdays, form the backbone of the network conveniently linking key attractions to each other and the city. Over the next few years these "A Routes" will be through-routed across the city to further improve connections for passengers.

**B Routes** – Secondary routes that ensure maximum public transport coverage. These routes run less often but provide local access particularly to areas not served by the core "A Routes". "B Routes" ensure most people are within 400 metres of a bus service.

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## OTHER INITIATIVES

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### 1. Central City Interchange (CCC)

As noted many times above, the City Council is currently building a new central city interchange (Bus Exchange) for the bus system. It is located in the new Crossing development and on Colombo Street. This will result in the bus system no longer having Cathedral Square as its heart and centre after 100+ years of operating from there. The other significant change with this relocation from the Square is the change of route patterns in the central city, from all bus routes beginning/finishing at the interchange, to a peripheral terminus system. This new system has all central city bus routes passing through a central intersection of routes (at the Exchange) and on to a peripheral terminus, located on the periphery of the central business district. This requires less space for bus stops at the intersection of routes and provides better coverage of the central city by individual bus routes.

The Bus Exchange comprises two parts, an on-street part and an off-street part. There will be six stops located on Colombo Street at Ballantynes/Arthur Barnets, associated with adjusted footpath widths, new infrastructure, improved lighting (both footpath and roadway) and veranda extensions on both sides of the street. There will be nine stops located in the building, with buses accessing from Lichfield Street and serving two high-amenity passenger lounges. Passengers will gain access to the lounges from Lichfield Street, Colombo Street, The Crossing or Cashel Plaza.

The Bus Exchange will open on 4th November with the first of two transition stages of bus routes moving away from the Square. The second transition stage is programmed for April 2001. The Exchange building will cost the City Council about \$10 million to build, and is on budget still.

There have been many bus system improvements catalysed by this project, including the introduction of the RTI system, changing the ticketing system, central city bus priority measures and the potential introduction of through routing.