

13. PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORT IMAGE AND BRANDING

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Corporate Plan Output: Passenger Transport	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the project being undertaken to review the image and branding of the Christchurch Public Passenger Transport system. This review is being conducted as a joint study with partners being the City Council, Environment Canterbury and the two main operators in Christchurch. This is particularly appropriate given that these are the parties contributing to the various elements of the system's image and brand.

In 1998, the City and Regional Councils adopted a joint public passenger transport strategy for Christchurch. This strategy was produced from an extended process involving community input, as well as input and support from across the Councils and the operators. Since that time both Councils have made many significant improvements to the system, along with the co-operation and assistance of the operators. The strategy outlined many projects that were and are still considered important to achieving the goals and targets of the strategy.

Improving the image and system brand were identified amongst those projects, and is the only one which has not had some progress made on it. Initially this was a result of a desire to get the house in order before we try to promote it. A number of other issues have also since contributed to it not being promoted.

We now have a good product (system) to promote, which is being reflected in very positive feedback in satisfaction ratings in Bus User surveys. There are measurable results that can be attributed to the response by the public to the improvements to the system.

However the image does not match the experience. Public perception of public passenger transport is poor, and has been for many years.

Now is an appropriate time to pick up the last unattended item on the strategy project list from 1998 and seek to bridge the gap between perceptions and reality of an improving and quality public passenger transport system.

Research is indicating that the system is seen as:

- lacking a clear identity or personality,
- confused and developing haphazardly
- having a proliferation of different brands and competing advertising messages
- having at least 15 different recognisable identities.

It is also indicating that users and potential users consider that the system should be seen as:

- modern, urban, cosmopolitan
- technologically advanced
- effective and efficient
- reliable, approachable, dependable
- integrated

This study will endeavour to produce options that will create these ideas or perceptions in the public mind.

Environment Canterbury initiated the image and branding project earlier this year. There were a number of meetings held as the first elements of the study. During these meetings, a number of concerns were raised by both the City Council and the bus operators regarding the management of the study. As a result the study was put on hold. Since then a revised management structure has been proposed which includes both City Council and operator presence as well as Environment Canterbury on the study management team.

The study is proposed with a staged approach. From here the stages include:

- Stakeholder consultation for information gathering
- Staff prepare a image and brand design brief
- Stakeholder consultation for reviewing key issues in the brief
- Consultants design a variety of options in response to the brief
- Consultation for and gauging reaction and acceptance of various image and branding options
- Design refinements
- Approval of imaging and branding proposals through relevant Council processes

It is suggested that to facilitate the input of all the community boards in later stages of this study, each one should nominate two members (and perhaps an alternate) to collectively form a community board consultative group for this study. The next stage of the study in relation to community board involvement is a proposed meeting of this consultative group to be held 5-7 p.m., on Tuesday, 24th July 2001 in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices. This meeting would cover information gathering from participants to identify issues and areas of concern including how (re)-branding would be incorporated in the system and key images and elements of a public passenger transport brand.

Should there be time at the board meeting, a brief presentation will be available to give further understanding of this project.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Board endorses the study.
 2. That the Board nominates two representatives to participate in a combined community board's consultative group.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the foregoing recommendations be adopted.