

Report No.	20-144
Information Only - No Decision Required	

GENERAL PASSENGER TRANSPORT UPDATE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on general matters relating to passenger transport services in the region. It does not cover patronage or trip data, this is addressed in the Public Transport Services Report - 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 (supplementary item to the agenda).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 20-144.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. No community engagement is required as a result of this report.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. There are no significant business risks.

6. CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

- 6.1. As the report deals entirely with administrative matters, there is no climate change impact.

7. EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT (ERAA)

- 7.1. At the Committee workshop on 18 August 2020 members recommended **Option 2 – alternative timetable** be the preferred option to implement the ERAA rest and meals break requirements. This option was felt to have the least impact on existing levels of service for customers, while still being able deliver a good outcome for bus drivers. Subsequently the options were presented to Council on the 22 September 2020, and **Option 2** was approved.
- 7.2. Option 2 requires timetables to change and these changes will be implemented on Sunday 6 December 2020. This date has been chosen as it should cause the least amount of disruption for the majority of our customers. For example IPU and Massey exams are complete, and only a few NCEA exams remain to be sat in the week of 6 December. This date is also the latest date prior to the Christmas holiday break changes would ideally be made.
- 7.3. To accommodate the required bus driver breaks and to improve service reliability, service frequencies will be changing from the current 20min/40min timings to less consistent frequencies of 20-25min/45min.

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- 7.4. There are currently three sets of timetable for Massey, with each set running at different times through the year (semester, non-semester, and summer). This causes some confusion for customers regarding which timetable set is running when. To reduce this confusion and to make it easier to understand we are moving to two timetable sets only (semester and non-semester).
- 7.5. The Massey & IPU bus route numbers and names are also changing. Currently Massey & IPU are serviced by routes that have been previously merged, and the old naming and numbering convention has been maintained. This has resulted in a complex and confusing routes and route numbers such as routes 12A/14 and 15/14. The upcoming changes will tidy this up so it's easier for customers to understand and simpler to present on customer information.
- 7.6. The names and numbers of urban bus routes are also changing to provide customers with better information on where routes are travelling to. For example route 1 Awapuni is changing to route 101 Awapuni via Park Rd, and route 2 Rugby is changing to route 102 Awapuni via Rugby St. Front of bus destination displays, on-street timetables, maps, Horizons website, and printed timetables will be updated to reflect these changes.
- 7.7. Promotion of the changes will be rolled out from early November, and will involve physical advertising (posters, media adverts), web based advertising i.e. social media, and radio. Timetables are currently in design, and are planned to be publicly available three weeks before go-live.

8. PALMERSTON NORTH SERVICE REVIEW (UPDATE)

- 8.1. Horizons commissioned BECA to undertake a high level review of New Zealand and International bus networks operating in cities with similar demographics to Palmerston North. The review findings highlighted common key features among the more successful and less successful networks. The comparison showed networks tended to fall somewhere along a model continuum between patronage vs coverage. These findings were presented to the **Palmerston North Review Governance Group (Governance Group)** on 7 September 2020.
- 8.2. The Governance Group agreed the future Palmerston North bus network should move more towards a patronage growth model, while still retaining some coverage based elements. As a result the Governance Group vision and principles for the future bus network will be updated, and distributed to the Governance Group prior to its next meeting in November.
- 8.3. Alongside this, work has begun on developing patronage focussed network and route options. These options will be presented the Governance Group in November. The options will then be refined over the following months, with public consultation planned for May/June 2021.

9. WHANGANUI URBAN - INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE AMENDMENTS

- 9.1. The new contract for Whanganui Urban services begun in October 2019, with additional daily and weekends services being implemented. A range of promotions were carried out to the support the changes, including a free travel week on all services. In December 2019 the Bee Card was launched in Whanganui.
- 9.2. Following these changes Officers have been working through customer and bus operator feedback, and undertaking assessments and audits of the bus service and supporting infrastructure. As a result of this work a programme of minor improvements has been developed. The improvements are aimed at increasing the customer visibility and ease of use of the bus service, and safe manoeuvring of buses.

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- 9.3. Working in collaboration with Whanganui District Council, a programme of bus stop and shelter improvements has been developed. Implementation of these improvements has begun, and includes such matters as the replacement of worn out signage, and installation of new bus stops and signs.
- 9.4. From early December refinements to customer information and routes are being introduced. These include:
- Minor design changes to printed timetables aimed at improving functionality and ease of use
 - Bus network map updates to reflect minor route changes and errors. It is planned to have the network map installed at more key locations across the city.
 - On-street timetables available at more inbound bus stops (individualising the information at each stop will be a later stage. At this point the relevant route timetable will be available in the on-street timetable holders)
 - Updated information on Horizons website
 - Route numbering and names changes to improve legibility for customers. For example Castlecliff Pink will become 201 Castlecliff via Fitzherbert Ave, and Castlecliff Blue becomes 202 Castlecliff via Hospital.
 - A slight variation to the Aramoho bus route. Instead of travelling down Nibblett Street the bus will continue along Harrison Street. This change improves bus movement safety and provides better community access to the services. A new stop is being installed on Harrison St near to the retirement village.
- 9.5. As the changes enhance customer experience rather than disrupt or significantly change travel for customers the promotional period will be quite short, 2 weeks prior to the go-live.
- 9.6. The Whanganui Advisory group is being re-established, with the first meeting planned to be held in November. The aim of the group will be to assist in:
- Enabling greater collaboration and alignment between bus network and supporting infrastructure design, and urban planning
 - Seeking value for money opportunities for improving and creating efficiencies to existing and future bus services and supporting infrastructure.

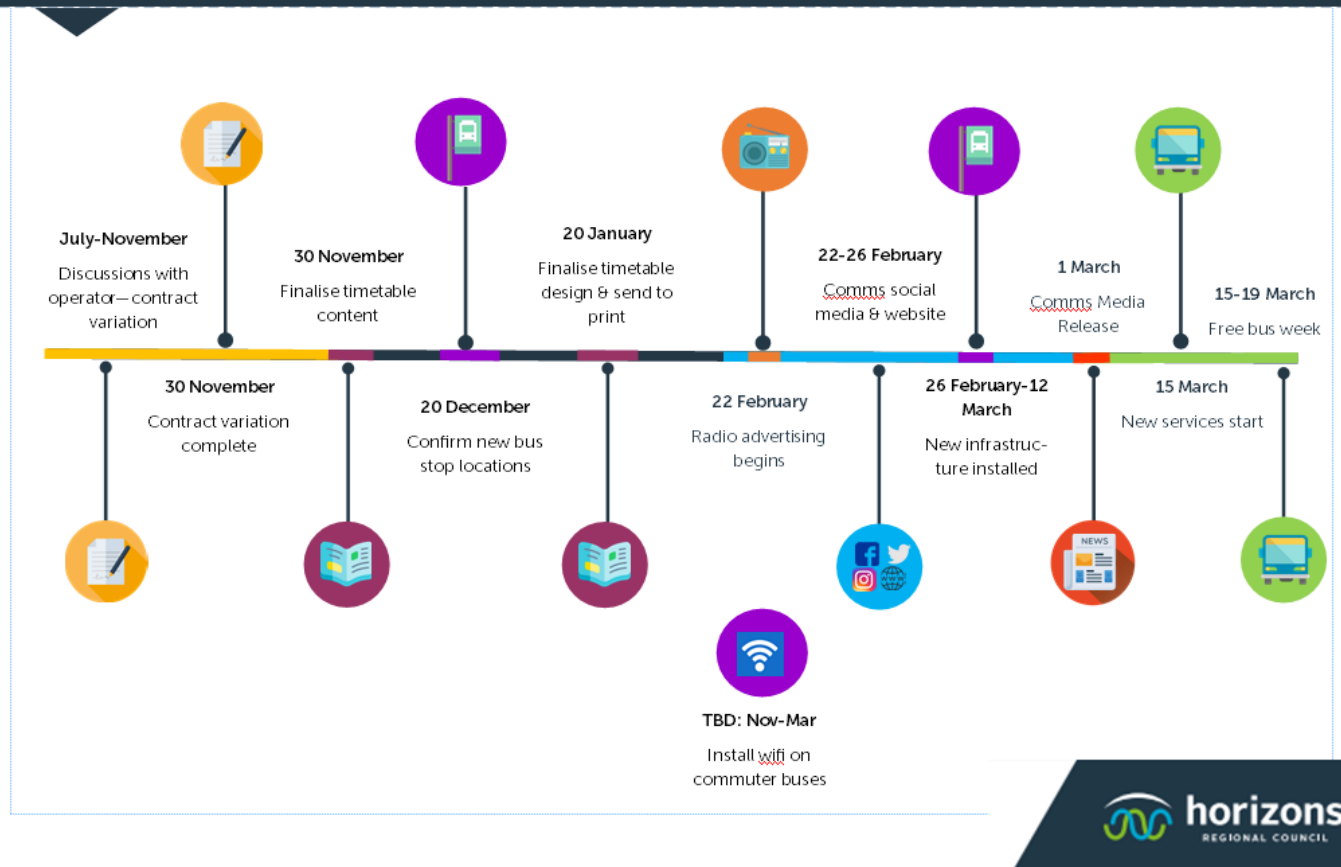
10. FEILDING SERVICE – UPCOMING CHANGES

- 10.1. Members will recall approving a suite of changes to the existing Feilding public transport service at Passenger Transport Committee meeting in May. Following this, the Committee recommendations were endorsed at the Regional Council meeting held on 26 May.
- 10.2. To refresh members, the changes approved by the Committee and Council include:
- Provision of a new Feilding town service, travelling around Feilding and running separately to the commuter service between Feilding and Palmerston North.
 - Provision of two additional bus trips running between Palmerston North and Feilding on Saturdays.
 - Amendment of the commuter timetable to move the timing of the last Palmerston North to Feilding trip on weekdays in order to provide a later evening option for returning to Feilding.
 - Provision of Wifi on the commuter service
 - Timetable check and adjustment if required to ensure efficiency and workability
- 10.3. These changes are planned to be implemented in March 2021.

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- 10.4. Discussions are underway with the operator to confirm and finalise the timetables for the new services and identify suitable bus stop locations. Costs, vehicle details and timeframes associated with the changes are also being discussed.
- 10.5. Below is an indicative timetable of key events leading up to implementation of the changes. Members should note that aspects of this timeline are subject to change and promotional events such as a ‘free bus week’ are subject to funding availability at the time.

Feilding services: Implementation Timeline 2020/21



- 10.6. A complete promotion plan and updated timeline will be provided to the Committee at the next meeting scheduled for February 2021.

11. SIGNIFICANT SERVICE IMPACTS

- 11.1. The following information highlights some of the recent events which have resulted in significant disruptions to service operations and customers.
- 11.2. On 16 September a peak morning bus trip between Palmerston North and Feilding collided with a train at the level crossing on Clevely Line in Bunnythorpe. The incident resulted in some passenger on the bus being taken to Palmerston North Hospital with minor injuries, and the tragic death of the bus driver. This loss of the driver was felt amongst the Horizons Transport team, the bus operator and its staff, and the community with many of the driver’s regular passengers expressing their sympathies. The cause of the incident is under investigation by the relevant official authorities such as the Transport Accident Investigations Commission. Members will be provided with the results of the formal investigation once available.

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- 11.3. Prior to Alert Level 4 Palmerston North City Council started a program of stormwater infrastructure replacement in the Long Melford Road area. The works resumed when the country moved down to Alert Level 2. Due to the depth of the trenching instability in the road space was a significant concern and the Awapuni and Rugby bus routes were forced to detour as result of the works. The stormwater replacement was completed in September and buses have since returned to the area.
- 11.4. On 18 August a large fire at a warehouse on Keith St resulted in the closure of roads in the local vicinity of the warehouse for several hours. This resulted in a significant detour to the Fernlea and Heights bus routes.
- 11.5. Manchester Square in Feilding was closed on 9 October for the Feilding Rural Day and again on 16 October for the Pink Shirt Day event. As a result, the central bus stop on the Square was bypassed, and buses detoured down Fergusson St and Warwick St before returning to the normal bus route.
- 11.6. Traffic flows in the Ashhurst area have significantly increased due to the closure of the Gorge and the subsequent increased usage of Saddle Road. As a result, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has commenced safety improvement works at the intersection of York St and Cambridge Ave. The work is expected to take several months and during this time buses will be unable to use York St.

12. REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- 12.1. Development of the Regional Land Transport Plan, 2021 is well underway. The Regional Transport Committee (RTC) approved the strategic direction component of the Plan at their meeting on 1 September. Feedback from the Passenger Transport Committee was relayed via PTC representatives on the RTC. Changes were made to the strategic objectives and investment priorities as a result of this feedback.
- 12.2. The approved vision, objectives and investment priorities are listed below for Members information.

Vision

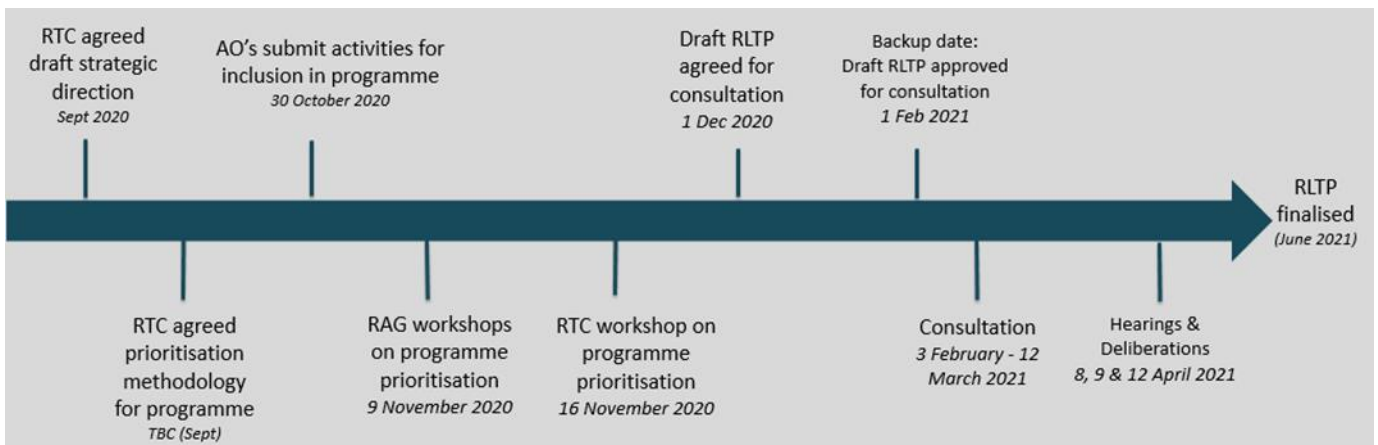
- 12.3. A region that connects central New Zealand and supports safe, accessible, and sustainable transport options.

Objectives

- 12.4. The objectives outline what the region plans to do to achieve the vision. They are the also the benefits that we will see if we solve the issues (Problems). The objectives are outlined below.
 - **Objective 1 - Travel Choice:** Transport users in the region have access to affordable transport choices that are attractive, viable and encourage multi-modal travel.
 - **Objective 2 - Connectivity and efficiency:** The regional transport network connects central New Zealand and is efficient, reliable and resilient.
 - **Objective 3 - Safety:** The transport network is safe for all users.
 - **Objective 4 - Environment:** The impact of transport on the environment and the transport system's vulnerability to climate change are minimised.
 - **Objective 5 - Land Use Integration:** Transport and land use are integrated to support well connected communities that promote a strong regional economy and liveable region.

Strategic Priorities (10 year investment priorities)

- 12.5. The strategic priorities (or 10 year investment priorities as they can also be referred to) are the key focus areas for the region. Their purpose is to tell the region’s short to medium term investment story. While guided by the strategic context and vision, the priorities will have a narrower focus, **responding to the most urgent and significant barriers in the short to medium term** to achieve the longer term vision.
- **Transport Strategic Priority 1 - Connectivity and Access:** Provide better transport connections and options to enable efficient and safe movement of people and freight, improved access to health, social and economic opportunities.
 - **Transport Strategic Priority 2 - Safety:** Improve the transport network to create a safe transport system for all users.
 - **Transport Strategic Priority 3 - Better travel options:** Make active and public transport and alternative freight modes, safe, attractive and viable options for more trips throughout the region.
 - **Transport Strategic Priority 4 - Environment:** Reduce environmental impacts and carbon emissions from the transport system.
 - **Transport Strategic Priority 5 - Resilience:** Build resilience into the region’s transport network by strengthening priority transport lifelines.
- 12.6. The next stage of RLTP development is to complete the supporting text that tells the regional ‘story’ i.e. current state of play and future goals and develop the regional work programme which outlines the activities proposed over the next three years to achieve the regional objectives and vision.
- 12.7. The timeline for completion of the RLTP has been extended by two months to 30 June 2021. This has enabled us to amend the timeline and delay consultation until after the Christmas/New Year period. The timeline below provides the **indicative** timeline at this stage.



- 12.8. Members are reminded that should they have feedback regarding the RLTP development process or detail, they should make this known to the RTC reps sitting on the Passenger Transport Committee.

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13. SIGNIFICANCE

13.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

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ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.