

Report No.	20-149
Information Only - No Decision Required	

## REPORT ON THE TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME AND THE CONFESSIONARY FARE SCHEME FOR 2019-2020

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report is to inform Members of the performance of Total Mobility and Health Shuttle services in 2019-20.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 20-149.

### 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 deal entirely with administrative matters, there is no climate change impact.

### 7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The Total Mobility (TM) scheme is to assist eligible people with impairments to access appropriate transport to enhance their community participation. This assistance is provided in the form of subsidised door to door transport services wherever scheme transport providers operate. There are currently 6,766 registered clients on the Horizons TM scheme.
- 7.2. TM operates in 5 districts with the Horizons region; Whanganui, Palmerston North, Levin, Marton, and Feilding
- 7.3. The subsidy is currently set at 50% of the fare up to a maximum amount. In Whanganui, Palmerston North and Levin the maximum amount per trip is \$10, and in Marton and Feilding the maximum amount is \$5 per trip. The subsidised part of the fare is funded jointly by Horizons through rates, and central government (through Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency).
- 7.4. Horizons supports a number of specialised community transport solutions which mainly assist people accessing medical appointments. These health shuttles and community vans have capped funding each year and fall under the umbrella of the Concessionary Fare scheme.

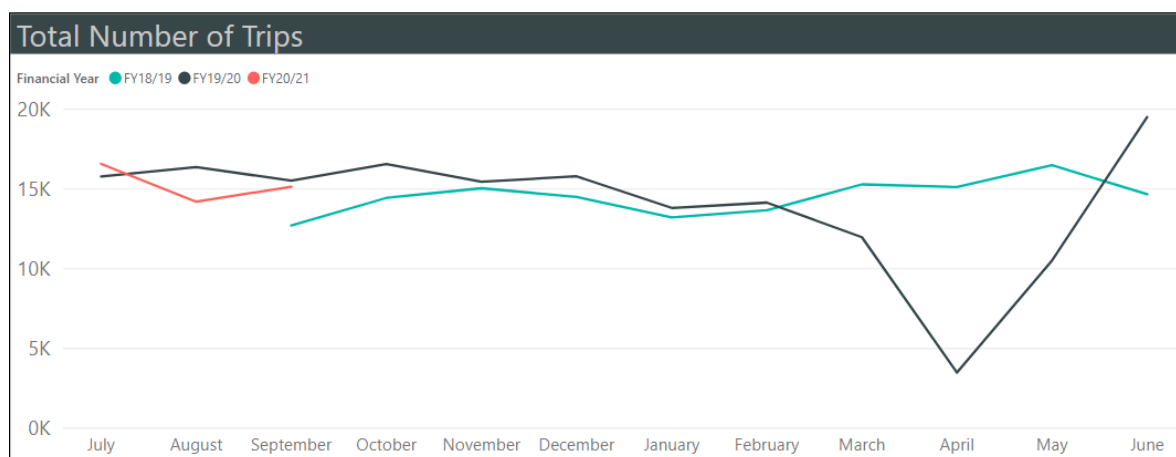
## 8. TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME

- 8.1. This section of the report provides information on the performance of the Total Mobility scheme over the Financial Year 2019/20. To illustrate trends and to provide comparisons the graphs below also show information from financial year 2018/19, and for the first quarter of the current financial year (2020/21). For the first time the information has been pulled directly from the TM electronic administration system (Ridewise). As this system was introduced in 2018 only nine months of data for the financial year 2018/19 is available.
- 8.2. A summary of the high level statistics for the full year 2019/20 are as follows:
- a) Number of trips taken on the TM scheme, 162,000
  - b) Total of kilometers travelled, 644,000 kms
  - c) Number of trips taken using a wheelchair hoist, 21,000
  - d) Total subsidy paid to service providers, \$1.29m

### Usage of TM scheme

- 8.3. Figure 1 below shows the usage of the TM scheme by month. Between July and December 2019 the use of TM scheme was generally consistent, with between 14,500 and 16,500 trips being taken per month. This level of usage is slightly higher when compared to the same period in 2018, by the end of the 2018/19 the usage is tracking around these same levels as 2019/20. This is likely due to the effect of the introduction of the new system as the system is easier to use and it has generated greater awareness of TM.
- 8.3.1. From February to April 2020 the impact of Covid-19 significantly affected the use of TM, with a drop of 75% in the number of trips taken. During the COVID-19 Lockdown period, taxi operators continued to provide transport to ensure our clients could access essential services. The disruption caused by COVID-19 is clearly shown and reflects the advice provided at the time by the Ministry of Health, that travel should be kept to a minimum, while lockdown was in place.
- 8.4. As part of the Covid-19 response, on 14 April 2020 central government (through Waka Kotahi NZ transport Agency) provided additional funding to increase up to double the current subsidy offered to our clients. This meant a significant proportion of trips became free. As we moved down through the alert levels, and travel restrictions eased, some people did take advantage of the cheaper travel. We believe this was only a small proportion of our clients as most people remained aware of their own vulnerability during this time and chose not to travel.

- 8.5. Once normal subsidy levels resumed in July usage dropped back to normal levels. Note: there was a slight decline in August 2020, which aligns to the move back up to Covid-19 alert level 2, during this month.



**Figure 1: Total number of Total Mobility trips taken by month**

### Number of clients using TM

- 8.6. From the Ridewise data we are now able to identify how many people are actively using the TM scheme, compared to the number who are registered on the scheme (approximately 40%). Table 1 below shows the comparison between years. When compared to 2018/19, in 2019/20 there were 143 more clients using TM for 1.01 trips on average per month. Table 1 below show the total unique clients for each year and the average number of trips they take in a month.
- 8.7. Interestingly the number of unique clients for the first quarter 2020/21 is only 1,121 but these clients are on average taking more trips. As Covid-19 has affected our client's travel behaviour, a possible assumption could be that this lower client number represents our core user base i.e. those people who rely on TM for their regular travel needs typically to make one shopping or appointment trip per week. This would imply that the remaining 1500-1600 clients are our ad hoc/occasional users.

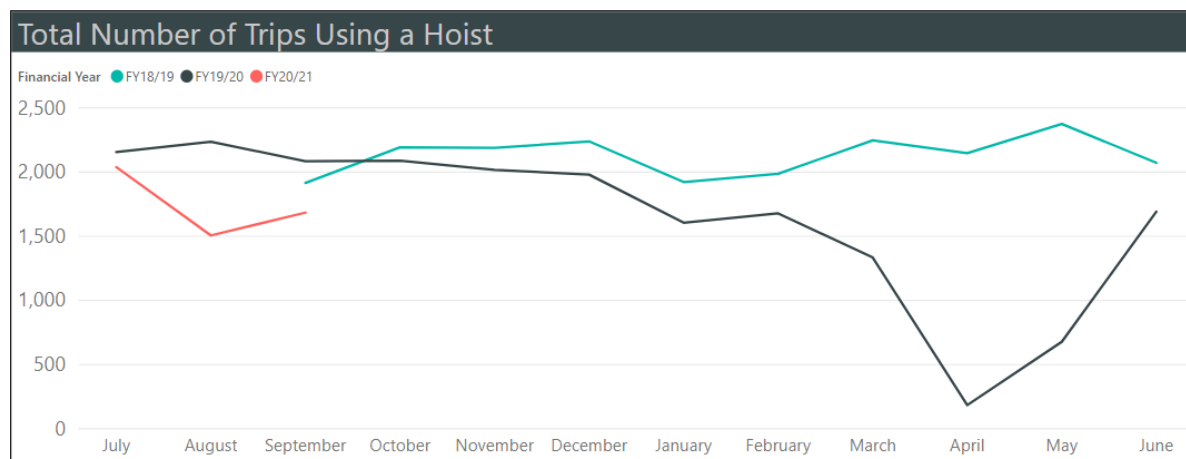
	2018/19	2019/20	Year to date 2020/21
Number of unique clients who used TM	2631	2774	1121
% of unique clients v current registered clients *	39%	41%	17%
Average number of trips taken by each unique client per month	3.52	4.53	5.89

**Table 1: Unique client numbers and average trips per month**

[\* based on current registered number of clients = 6,766]

### Usage of wheelchair hoists

- 8.8. Figure 2 shows the trend across months and years for the number of trips which use a wheelchair hoist. Excluding the effects of Covid-19 approximately 2,000 trips per month involve the use of a wheelchair hoist (~13% of all trips). Between 26-28% of our actively client base require the use of a wheelchair hoist. The use of TM in Figure 2 follow similar trends to those displayed in Figure 1. Noting the effects of Covid-19 on travel behavior started to present earlier in for this more vulnerable group with their travel starting to drop from late 2019/early 2020.

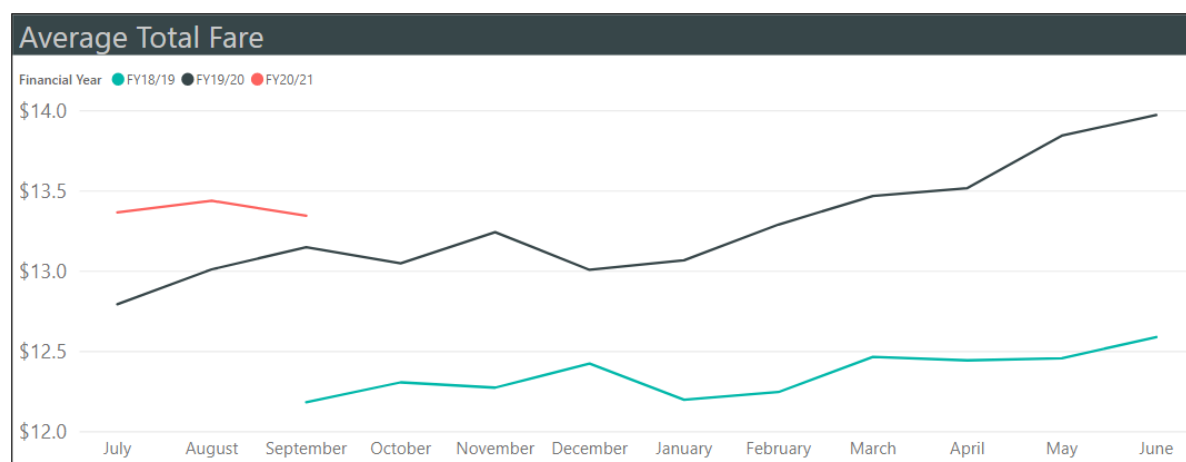


**Figure 2: Total number of wheelchair hoist trips taken by month**

- 8.9. There are currently 18 wheelchair hoist vans available for use on the Horizons TM scheme (Palmerston North - 11, Levin – 2, and Whanganui – 5).

### Average fare per trip

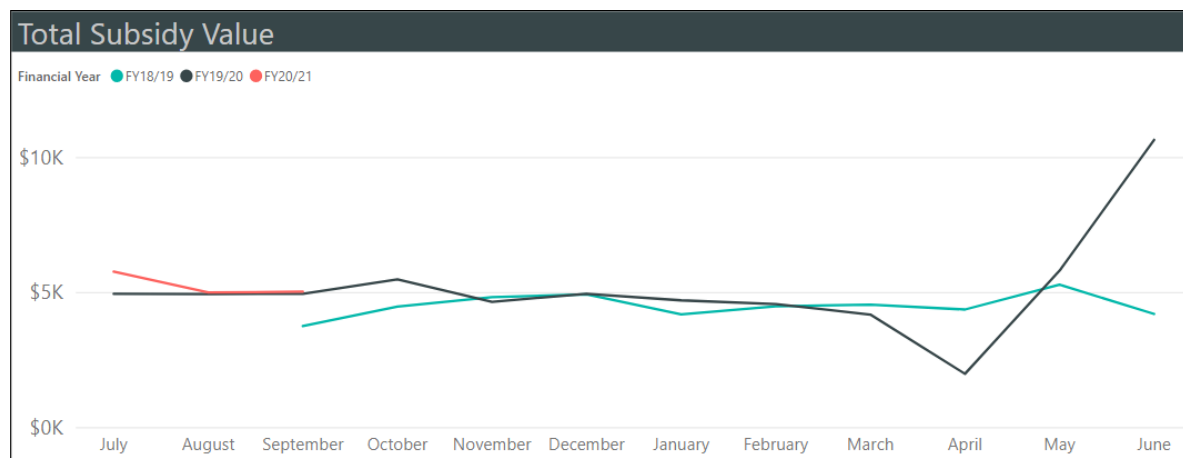
- 8.9.1. The average total fare, (Figure 3) shows a steady increase across the year of total fares paid by clients. Transport operators have reported, no increases in fares or tariffs during this time so we may conclude that clients have been travelling further. The biggest increase was at the end of the 2019-20 FY, which again is consistent with the impacts of COVID-19 with the increase in the subsidy available to clients. The average fare is typically above the maximum amount available on the scheme (\$10 or \$5).



**Figure 3: Average total fare paid by TM client per trip**

### Subsidy paid to transport service providers

- 8.9.2. Figure 4 shows monthly subsidy value paid to transport service providers. Pre-Covid the amount remained consistently around \$5k per month. The effects of Covid-19 travel restrictions meant the subsidy dropped in March and for part of April. The additional Covid-19 funding for the increased client subsidy and the subsequent increase in the usage of the scheme meant the payment to transport service providers doubled in the last 2 months of the financial year.
- 8.9.3. With the return back to normal fare subsidies for clients the payments to service providers has dropped back to pre Covid-19 levels for the first quarter of 2020/21.



**Figure 4: monthly subsidy paid to transport service providers**

### Customer experience

- 8.10. Each year Horizons undertakes a customer satisfaction survey in one of the 5 districts Total Mobility is available, to find out how satisfied customers are with the service.
- 8.11. The 2020 survey sought feedback from our Feilding based clients, and was undertaken between mid-June to end July 2020. Details of the survey and its outcomes are provided in a separate report to Committee.
- 8.12. The 2021 survey will cover the Palmerston North area.

## 9. TOTAL MOBILITY ELECTRONIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

- 9.1. In 2018 Horizons implemented the national electronic administration system for TM called Ridewise 1. The implementation included an electronic client card, an online application assessment form for assessment agencies, and an online invoicing and payment authorisation system between Horizons and service providers.
- 9.2. Ridewise 1 begun to be rolled out across the country from 2014. Since then there has been a significant development in technology and certain aspects of the original system need to be upgraded. Ridewise 2 enhancements are planned to deliver:
- Further reduction in potential fraudulent activity
  - Greater data capture to manage integrity
  - Improved reporting platform
  - Further reduction in the manual process
  - An overall better user experience

- 9.3. The original expectations was that Ridewise 2 would be available to regional councils in 2020. However users testing is still underway and is not expected to be complete until the end of this calendar year. Therefore it is likely Horizons will not move to Ridewise 2 until the next financial year.

## 10. CONCESSIONARY FARE SCHEME

- 10.1. Tables 2 and 3 show expenditure and passenger numbers for 2019/20 and 2018/19 for each of the services covered by the concessionary fare scheme. The annual funding is capped to approved budget for the various services.

Service	2018/19			2019/20		
	Actuals	Budget	Variance	Actuals	Budget	Variance
Taumarunui Mobility Van	14,000	14,000	0	11,827	14,000	2,174
Horowhenua Health Shuttle	21,439	25,000	3,561	16,389	25,000	8,611
St John - Feilding to PN	4,500	4,500	-	4,500	4,500	-
St John - Dannevirke to PN	10,108	12,254	2,146	7,515	12,254	4,739
St John - Pahiatua to PN	12,392	12,465	73	11,408	12,465	1,057
Foxton Community Services Van	2,551	1,200	- 1,351	1,719	1,200	- 519
Dannevirke Community Vehicle Trust	10,000	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	-
Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society	329	1,200	871	118	1,200	1,082
St John - Marton	4,201	4,200	- 1	4,134	4,200	66
Waimarino Shuttle	2,097	2,100	3	2,151	2,625	474
St John - Whanganui	620	620	-	620	620	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,237</b>	<b>87,539</b>	<b>5,302</b>	<b>70,381</b>	<b>88,064</b>	<b>17,683</b>

Table 2: actual spend versus budget

Service	Patronage	
	2018/19	2019/20
Taumarunui Mobility Van	4,000	3,099
Horowhenua Health Shuttle	7,082	5,463
St John - Feilding to PN	3,379	3,488
St John - Dannevirke to PN	2,497	1,869
St John - Pahiatua to PN	3,098	2,852
Foxton Community Services Van*		782
Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society*		96
St John - Marton	1,473	1,294
Waimarino Shuttle	130	130
St John - Whanganui	264	223
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,923</b>	<b>19,296</b>

Table 3: annual patronage.

[\* Patronage figures not available for 2018/19]

- 10.2. The capped funding provided to the Health Shuttles, was depleted in the Feilding district by February 2019, in the Waimarino district by March 2019 and in Marton by April 2019. Waimarino submitted an application requesting extra funding to cover increased operational costs. An increase of \$525 was approved, through the Annual Plan process for the 2019/20 FY.
- 10.3. Most services discontinued operation throughout the COVID-19 lockdown and beyond. However, all were back to normal operations by 30 June 2020.. The impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on services, showed a decrease in passenger numbers from the previous financial year, and an under spend of \$17,683, compared to \$5,302 from the previous year.

20 October 2020

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## **11. SIGNIFICANCE**

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

Desley Monks  
**TOTAL MOBILITY CO-ORDINATOR**

Rhona Hewitt  
**MANAGER TRANSPORT SERVICES**

## **ANNEXES**

There are no attachments for this report.