

**Regional Passenger
Transport Plan for the
Manawatu-Wanganui Region**



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FOREWORD

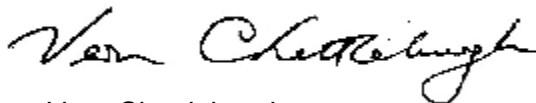
The Regional Passenger Transport Plan 2006 reflects a change in direction in the provision of passenger transport for Horizons Regional Council. Incorporating the vision of both the New Zealand Transport Strategy and the Regional Land Transport Strategy, the Plan has extended its support from focusing mainly on the needs of the transport disadvantaged, to encouraging greater use of passenger transport by all sectors of the community, including those with special transport needs.

The Plan gives effect to the strategic direction set out in the Regional Land Transport Strategy, which identified the need to build upon services already being provided in order to meet this ambitious goal.

Commuter services have been highlighted as an area for improvement. Increasing passenger transport use in urban areas, investigating opportunities for those travelling significant distances from rural centres and ensuring passenger transport is an attractive, convenient alternative to private vehicle use will encourage more passengers.

Additionally, the Strategy specified the need for investigation and introduction of appropriate passenger services for rural areas and small towns. Due to the geographic and socio-economic nature of the Manawatu-Wanganui Region, with its numerous dispersed rural settlements, this second action point represents a great challenge. Innovative solutions will be needed for areas where traditional bus services are not viable and the development of quality partnerships with other stakeholders will be vital in addressing these issues. Rail services have also been highlighted as an area for investigation and review.

The valuable contribution received from many interested parties through the development of the Plan supports continued progress towards a safe, efficient, responsive and integrated public transport system for our Region. We thank you for your participation in this process.



Vern Chettleburgh
CHAIRMAN
PASSENGER TRANSPORT SUBCOMMITTEE

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1. Background

1.1 Introduction

This document is the **Regional Passenger Transport Plan (PTP)** for the Manawatu-Wanganui Region. It replaces the Passenger Transport Plan produced in October 2002.

The Passenger Transport Plan outlines the passenger transport needs of the region, and the services required to meet those needs. The Plan addresses land transport only and does not address air or sea travel. The term “*passenger transport*” means transport services such as buses and taxis which are available for public use. It does not include school bus services provided by the Ministry of Education.

This Plan outlines those services considered necessary to meet the passenger transport needs of the Region. Where these services are not already provided, Horizons Regional Council may tender these services and provide financial assistance to the successful tenderer in order for the service to be provided. This Plan also sets out policies Horizons Regional Council will follow in establishing and funding passenger services.

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1.2 The Manawatu-Wanganui Region

The Manawatu-Wanganui Region covers a land area of 22,179 square kilometres in the lower central North Island. This is approximately 10% of New Zealand’s total land area. There are seven local authorities which are almost completely contained within the Region:

- Ruapehu
- Wanganui
- Rangitikei
- Manawatu
- Palmerston North City
- Tararua
- Horowhenua

with small portions of Waitomo District, Stratford District and Taupo District also included within regional boundaries. The major urban settlements are Palmerston North and Wanganui. Other urban centres include Levin, Feilding, Dannevirke, Taumarunui, and Marton. The region contains many dispersed rural settlements.

The population of the Manawatu-Wanganui Region is approximately 220,000. Population growth is predicted in the main centres, Palmerston North and Wanganui, in coming years, with the remaining districts likely to experience population decline. Consistent with national trends, the Region's median age is expected to increase steadily over the next 20 years.

1.3 Horizons Regional Council

The Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council (which now trades as Horizons Regional Council) was created by local government re-organisation on 1 November 1989. The Council took over the functions of 40 former authorities from within the region, including Catchment and Regional Water Boards, Pest Destruction Boards, Drainage Boards, United Councils and Noxious Plants Authorities. Council functions include:

- natural resource management, including the control of water and air quality;
- river and drainage engineering, including flood protection work;
- land management, including soil conservation and the control of animal pests and plant pests;
- emergency management; and
- land transport.

1.4 Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of this Plan is to identify the passenger transport needs of the region, some of which will be provided without financial support from Horizons Regional Council, and others, which meet the specified criteria but are not, or can no longer be, provided without financial support, and may need to be granted subsidy assistance from Horizons Regional Council.

This Plan sets out policies for the provision of these services. It specifies which services are currently needed in this region, and how a new service would qualify for support. The ways in which Horizons Regional Council can provide this support, and its role regarding tendering and contracting of services, is also defined.

Only those services specified in, or meeting the criteria set out in, this Plan, will be eligible to be subsidized by Horizons Regional Council if necessary.

This Plan also outlines the investigation and implementation of projects relating to passenger transport in our Region, including Park and Ride developments.

Any passenger transport service already operating in this region, regardless of whether it is specified in this Plan, can be operated commercially (i.e. without Horizons Regional Council support), provided it has first been notified to, and registered by, Horizons Regional Council. Section 8 of the Regional Passenger Transport Plan outlines the process and criteria for the registration of these services.

1.5 Legislative Framework

1.5.1 Transport Services Licensing Act 1989

It is not mandatory for a Passenger Transport Plan to be prepared. However, without a Plan it is not possible for Horizons Regional Council to financially support any passenger services.

A Regional Passenger Transport Plan is defined in Section 47 of the Transport Services Licensing Act 1989 as:

"a plan which is:

- a. prepared by a regional council or a territorial authority that has the functions, powers, and duties of a regional council under this Act; and*
- b. prepared in consultation with the public and the constituent authorities (if any) in the Region concerned; and*
- c. made available to the public; and*
- d. specifying the passenger services the regional council or territorial authority proposes to be provided in its region or district, both generally and in respect of the transport disadvantaged.*

such a plan -

- a. may specify the conditions of the services the regional council concerned proposes to be provided in its region; and*
- b. without limiting the generality of paragraph (a) of this subsection, may specify all or any of the following matters:*
 - i. routes, capacity, frequency of service, and fare structure:*
 - ii. any special provisions for users of a specified class or description of the service or any of them; and*
- c. may specify any other matters the regional council thinks fit."*

At the time of writing, Ministry of Transport was undertaking a review of the Transport Licensing Act and Land Transport New Zealand reviewing the procurement procedures for public passenger transport services. Once the findings of these reviews are known, amendments will be made to the Passenger Transport Plan if necessary.

1.5.2 Land Transport Act 1998

The Land Transport Act 1998, requires all regional councils to prepare a regional land transport strategy. The Land Transport Act also specifies that a passenger transport plan forms part of the regional land transport strategy for the region.

The Regional Land Transport Strategy sets out a number of policies which guided the preparation of this plan. These are outlined in Section 1.5.4 below.

1.5.3 New Zealand Transport Strategy 2002

The New Zealand Transport Strategy was released in 2002 and recognizes all modes and users of transport as well as the growing need to plan sustainable transport systems.

The vision of the New Zealand Transport Strategy is for New Zealand to have an affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable transport system by 2010. These principles have been incorporated into the development of this document.

1.5.4 Regional Land Transport Strategy 2006

The development of the current Regional Land Transport Strategy commenced with a regional transportation study during 2004, which identified key transport issues for the region over the next 20 years and recommended a number of proposals to monitor and address these issues.

Key issues for the Region relevant to this Plan include the identification and improvement of strategic links between Palmerston North and Feilding, and provision for the future growth of Palmerston North; the need to reverse the decline in the use of active transport modes and the need to improve public passenger use by commuters, and introduce appropriate passenger services for rural areas and small towns.

Specific requirements of the Regional Land Transport Strategy (2006) as they affect passenger transport are:

Policy 6 Support greater use of public passenger transport by all sectors of the community.

Policy 7 Ensure that people with special transport needs are provided for in the public transport system.

Policy 11 Promote a change in travel behaviour in order to reduce the use of private motor vehicles and promote public health through more active modes of transport.

The strategy sets out a number of implementation methods for each policy. The contents of the Regional Land Transport Strategy that relate to passenger transport are shown in Annex A.

1.5.5 Regional Passenger Transport Plan

The Regional Passenger Transport Plan sets out policies which Horizons Regional Council will follow in developing and maintaining the region's passenger transport system. It is designed to give effect to the strategic direction set out in the Regional Land Transport Strategy, which identified (as detailed above) the need to *build upon* services already being provided, improve public passenger use by commuters, and the introduction of appropriate passenger services for rural areas and small towns.

1.6 Regional Council Passenger Transport Functions and Responsibilities

Regional councils have the primary responsibility for planning, funding, and overall co-ordination of the passenger transport network. While the Land Transport Management Act 2003 has been revised to allow regional councils to have 'interest/ownership' in passenger transport operations through the creation of a LATE (Local Authority Trading Enterprise), Horizons Regional Council has no plans to take up such a role in our Region.

The role of Regional Councils in passenger transport is set out in the Transport Services Licensing Act 1989, Transit NZ Act 1989, Local Government Act 1974, Land Transport Act 1998 and Land Transport Management Act 2003.

Transport roles of the Regional Council include:

- preparation and implementation of the Land Transport Programme, Passenger Transport Plan, and the Regional Land Transport Strategy;
- registration of notified commercial passenger services;
- contracting and funding of specified passenger services; and
- ensuring the availability of information about passenger transport.

More specifically the passenger transport role of Horizons Regional Council is:

- consulting with local authorities, adjoining Regional Councils, passenger transport operators, the public and other key stakeholders, over planning public transport services, and the respective co-ordination and use of resources;
- ensuring funding of contracted specified passenger services;
- facilitating cost-effective solutions to transport needs;
- increasing the availability and accessibility of public transport, *especially*:
- consideration of the needs of the transport disadvantaged;
- encouraging and creating opportunities for increased public transport use by commuters;
- investigating and trialing innovative ways to meet the transport needs of rural communities;
- ensuring availability of information about passenger transport services;
- advocating for the integration of passenger service planning into the whole land transport system and land use planning;
- assisting with travel demand management; and
- encouraging appropriate service technology.

1.7 Roles of Other Organisations in Passenger Transport

Many other organisations have a role in the provision of passenger transport services, including Land Transport New Zealand, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Education, and territorial local authorities.

Commercial bus operators play an integral role in the provision of passenger transport in our region, with many providing commuter and shopper's services for local communities, commonly as part of long-distance services.

There are two passenger rail services operating in our Region, the Overlander between Auckland and Wellington, (scheduled to be cancelled in September 2006) and a daily commuter service, which carries passengers from Palmerston North to Wellington. Horizons Regional Council will encourage any further introduction of passenger rail services by commercial operators into the area wherever appropriate.

Horizons Regional Council will encourage commercial operators (including both rail and bus operators), presently operating without financial assistance, to continue their current level of service.

Additionally, a number of community organisations throughout our Region provide important, often health-related transport services for their local communities. For the most part, volunteer drivers operate these services. Horizons Regional Council recognises that these types of services often operate in rural areas, with populations that may be unable to sustain a traditional bus service. Support for existing services and encouraging the establishment of similar organisations form part of this Plan.

The reduction of medical services in rural towns has exacerbated the need for transport options to larger centres. There is a recognition that greater co-ordination and communication between Horizons Regional Council, the Ministry of Health and local Public Health Organisations is needed.

Land Transport New Zealand provides funding for regional councils to assist in the provision of passenger transport and establish and enforce licensing and safety standards. The Ministry of Transport sets the overall policy framework through legislation.

Territorial local authorities are involved in advocacy and liaison on behalf of local communities regarding passenger transport, and have a role in passenger transport infrastructure provision. They direct land use planning in their districts and guide its integration with roading networks. In accordance with the Regional Land Transport Strategy, they work towards higher density residential developments close to main urban transport routes/modes, promote the use of urban design protocols, and manage parking supply and pricing. All these principles can be applied to encourage and support passenger transport provision and use.

Horizons Regional Council's passenger transport efforts are complemented by adjoining regional councils, such as Environment Waikato and Greater Wellington Regional Council. This Plan involves a number of activities which will require the close co-ordination of resources and communication between

Councils. This close communication will be integral to the success of these projects.

Annex B details the roles of the transport funders, planners and operators who are part of the region's passenger transport network.

1.8 The Regional Land Transport Committee

Section 178 of the Land Transport Act requires each regional council to have a Regional Land Transport Committee. The function of the Regional Land Transport Committee (as set out in that section) is:

“to prepare for approval by the relevant regional council the regional land transport strategy prepared under Section 175.”

The Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Land Transport Committee comprises representatives of the following:

- Horizons Regional Council;
- Territorial Authorities;
- One member appointed by the Council to represent each of the following NZTS objectives:
 - assisting economic development;
 - assisting safety and personal security
 - improving access and mobility;
 - protecting and promoting public health; and
 - ensuring environmental sustainability
- One member appointed to represent cultural interests.
- Land Transport New Zealand;
- Commercial road users;
- New Zealand Police;
- Private road users;
- Transit New Zealand;
- One advisory member appointed by Council to represent rail infrastructure interests; and
- One advisory member to represent railway operators.

The committee has responsibility for ensuring the co-ordination of land transport activities at a regional level.

Regional Passenger Transport Subcommittee

The Regional Council has delegated undertaking the planning and implementation of the region's passenger transport services to the Passenger Transport Subcommittee.

The Passenger Transport Subcommittee consists of the following representatives:

- three Regional Councillors;
- one member appointed by the RLTC to represent Palmerston North City Council;
- one member appointed by the RLTC to represent Wanganui District Council; and

- one member appointed by the RLTC to represent Horowhenua District Council.

1.9 Land Transport Programme

The annual Land Transport Programme, as required by the Land Transport Management Act 2003, is prepared by Horizons Regional Council and details land transport projects and activities for which funding assistance is sought from Land Transport New Zealand for the following year. It covers passenger transport, administration, land transport planning and road safety projects.

2. Providing Passenger Transport for our Region

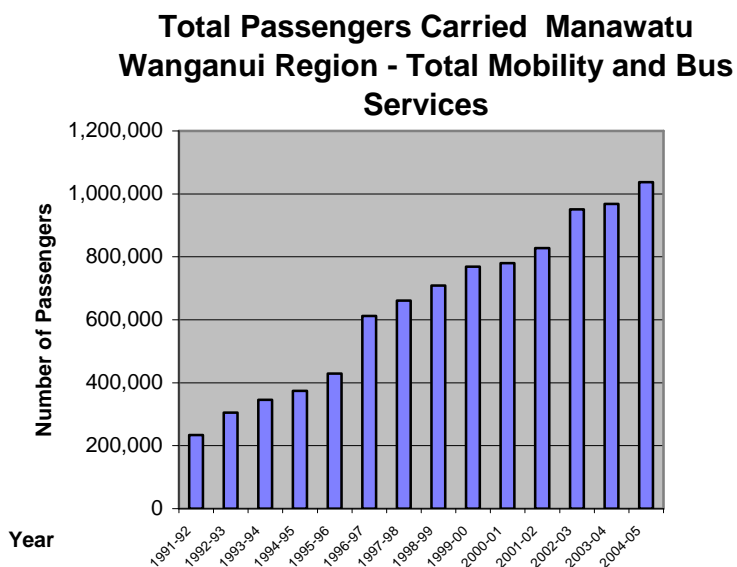
2.1 Introduction

The Manawatu-Wanganui Region, considering its geographical size and low population density, is relatively well serviced by public passenger transport, with a higher ratio of annual passengers carried per head of population than some other similar regions.

There are now regular urban bus services operating in Palmerston North, Wanganui and Levin, and a number of daily commuter services operate between centres. Total Mobility services, provided as an alternative to public transport for those with a disability preventing bus use, are available in seven of the Region's towns and cities.

However, passenger transport services in the Region have traditionally focused largely on the provision of services for the "transport disadvantaged"¹, and while the number of passengers carried on services in the Region has steadily increased since the early 1990s, the proportion of people using public transport as an option for commuting to work has declined from 3% to 1% over the last 20 years.

Table 1: Total of bus service and total mobility passengers carried in the Manawatu-Wanganui Region



¹ The Plan is required to specify services to be provided in a region generally and "in respect of the transport disadvantaged" (Section 47(d) of the Transport Services Licensing Act 1989). For the purpose of this Plan, the "transport-disadvantaged" are those residents of the region who, due to age, income or disability, have limited access to essential services and amenities, including medical facilities, employment and education opportunities, shopping facilities such as supermarkets and so on.

The New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS) requires that a wider role for passenger transport be considered, including improving and promoting use of services by the general population, especially commuters. Improved use of public transport is also consistent with the achievement of one of the key objectives of the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy, which is to “improve the provision and uptake of low energy transport options”.

The Regional Land Transport Strategy (2006) (of which this Plan forms part) therefore recognises the need to broaden the focus of public passenger transport to cater better for commuters and others who have private transport options (as well as providing for those with limited private transport options), and to promote the use of passenger transport by those groups. The Strategy sets the following targets for passenger transport use in the Region.

Table 2: Targets for passenger transport use

Measure	Baseline	Target Measure
An increase in the proportion of journeys to work by public passenger transport in Palmerston North.	1% of journeys to work made by public passenger transport in Palmerston North (2001 Census figures).	3% of journeys to work by public passenger transport in Palmerston North (2016 Census figures).
An increase in the number of trips taken on public passenger transport Region-wide.	1,036,000 trips taken on public transport in 2004-05.	1,700,000 trips taken by public passenger transport in 2015-16.

The Regional Land Transport Strategy also outlines travel demand management measures for our Region, and passenger transport may play a significant role in these. Travel Demand Management (TDM) may be defined as intervention which modifies transport decisions so that more desirable objectives may be achieved and the adverse impacts of travel reduced. TDM may include such things as strategies to

- change travel behaviour and thereby reduce the need to travel;
- encourage the use of lower impact modes;
- offer users a wider range of transport options;
- modify traffic patterns; and
- optimise the use of the transport system.

Specific actions for Travel Demand Management in the Strategy include the trial of school travel plans in selected schools in Palmerston North and Wanganui, the trial of workplace travel plans, the promotion of alternative modes of transport (including public transport) and completion of the trial of the Massey Unlimited Access Bus Service. All of these measures will be affected by the provision of public transport.

A key contributor to the long-term success and sustainability of a passenger transport network is land use planning. The way in which the Region plans for the future use of its most valuable resource, its land, may affect how well we are able to provide public transport services. The location of residential, industrial and commercial areas can have a significant impact on how much we need to travel each day as we work, study, produce and socialise. Equally, the way in which we plan, design and locate transport infrastructure can affect the planning of future land use. It is, therefore, vitally important that

the two processes occur in an integrated way. The Regional Land Transport Strategy advocates the review of all district and regional planning documents to ensure alignment with the RLTS.

2.2 General Public Transport Needs of the Region

Access and mobility issues are significant for rural residents and those in rural centres in the Region. Without options for public transport, small communities struggle to retain residents in the face of a need to be near work, study, hospitals and other facilities. Additionally, the reduction in medical services in rural towns has exacerbated the need for transport options to larger centres. However, in many cases, these areas are too small to support traditional scheduled bus services, and innovative and cost-effective means of providing public transport must therefore be found.

The ageing of the Region's population will also increase the need for public transport and specialised mobility transport services. All territorial authorities within the Region will have a greater number of people aged over 65 years in 2026, when compared with 2001. This is a reflection of the national trend which will see the national median age rise to 46 years by 2051, compared with 35 in 2004.

This overall aging of the population will have a major influence on the predicted population changes for districts within the Region, with the greatest effects noticeable in the districts which are likely to have the highest median ages. For example, Statistics New Zealand's medium population projection scenario for the Horowhenua District predicts a population decrease of 7% and a median age of 52.4 years by 2026, up from 39.5 years in 2001. Such changes in demographic structure are likely to have a significant impact on the public transport needs of the population.

As indicated earlier, while the number of passengers carried on Horizons subsidised services in our Region has steadily increased since the early 1990s, the proportion of people using public transport to commute to work in our larger centres has decreased from 3% to 1%. In keeping with the broader focus for public transport which is required by the New Zealand Transport Strategy and the RLTS, there is a need to try to reverse this trend and improve public transport use by commuters. Improved use will also have a role in the travel demand measures under implementation in the Region.

Within these generally identified transport needs, it is the role of Horizons Regional Council to consider the specific needs of each part of the Region and identify what services can be provided to meet those needs. The costs and benefits of projects must be assessed, and financial constraints and funding priorities will determine how much transport assistance can be provided.

2.3 Identifying the Region's Public Transport Needs

The main purpose of this Plan is to identify the passenger transport needs of the Region. Some services will be provided without financial support from Horizons Regional Council. Others meet the specified criteria but cannot be provided without financial support, and need to be granted subsidy assistance from Horizons Regional Council.

The policies in the Regional Land Transport Strategy provide the framework in deciding what services are needed. The policies indicate that services which meet environmental (including congestion), economic, safety, health or access and mobility objectives should be supported. The actions included in the RLTS also outline a clear commitment to improving commuter services and access for those in rural communities, in line with the New Zealand Transport Strategy. These policies have been used to create the guidelines for support followed in this Plan.

The next step is to identify which current or potential services meet the criteria identified in the following policies. Those current services which meet the criteria will be included in this Plan and therefore be eligible for Horizons Regional Council subsidy should that be necessary. Any service that requires financial support from Horizons Regional Council to continue, or to be introduced, will be assessed against these criteria. If it meets the criteria, it will be eligible for Horizons Regional Council support.

Policy 1

Horizons Regional Council will financially support the provision of a passenger transport service that has a significant:

- economic;
- environmental;
- access and mobility;
- health; or
- safety

benefit to the community (including the transport disadvantaged).

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council will only consider support for a service if it has a significant economic, environmental, access and mobility, health or safety benefit to the community. Some services may satisfy one or more of these criteria. The Regional Passenger Transport Subcommittee will assess the benefit of a current or potential service in regard to these criteria and will take into consideration Land Transport New Zealand's economic evaluation procedures for passenger transport. Assessment will also include:

- investigation of the physical, social and economic environment in which the service does/will operate, as well as the existing transport services provided;
- surveying potential or existing passengers to see who is likely to use the service and why and;
- regularly monitoring and reviewing the services. This will be needed to ensure services continue to meet the guidelines.

Horizons Regional Council will endeavour to ensure that the needs of the transport disadvantaged are clearly identified and considered within this process.

All contracted services are subject to the funding criteria outlined in Policy 8.

Services eligible for Horizons Regional Council support can be identified by applying Policy 1 to:

- current services to see if they comply. If they do, they will be included in this Plan;
- requests for new services.

2.3.1 Specified Services

The following existing services are those which Horizons Regional Council currently considers meet Policy 1. These services are the minimum level of service that Horizons Regional Council considers necessary in the region. Horizons Regional Council will endeavour to ensure that these services will be maintained in the future, as long as they continue to meet the criteria set out in Policy 1, and subject to funding criteria in Policy 8. More details of these services are contained in Annex C.

Ruapehu District:

- Taumarunui taxi service
- Raetihi – Ohakune bus service
- Taumarunui Mobility Van

Wanganui District:

- City wide bus service
- Castlecliff overload services (school)
- Wanganui taxi service

Rangitikei District:

- Taihape – Wanganui bus
- Taihape – Palmerston North bus
- Marton taxi service

Manawatu District:

- Feilding – Palmerston North bus
- Feilding – Palmerston North Hospital Health Shuttle
- Feilding taxi service

Palmerston North City:

- City-wide bus service
- Linton – Palmerston North
- Palmerston North taxi service
- Ashhurst – Palmerston North

Horowhenua District:

- Foxton Beach services
- Levin Community services
- Horowhenua Community Bus
- Levin taxi service
- Levin – Palmerston North
- Foxton taxi service

Tararua District:

- Dannevirke Community Services
- Pahiatua – Palmerston North Services
- Dannevirke – Palmerston North Hospital Health Shuttle

Total Mobility Services

- Palmerston North
- Wanganui
- Feilding
- Levin
- Marton
- Foxton
- Taumarunui

Trials currently being carried out:

- Marton – Palmerston North Commuter Service
- Massey University Unlimited Access Scheme

2.3.2 Actions for Implementation during the next three years

Actions include:

Transport needs assessments for:

- Horowhenua (2006-07);
- Feilding (2006-07);
- Tararua (2007-08); and
- Ruapehu (2007-08).

These assessments will, where found necessary, include investigations into appropriate solutions to address the transport needs identified. It is expected that in some communities these solutions will take forms other than the traditional bus services (RLTS 6.3).

Investigations:

- Marton – Wanganui Commuter Services (2006-07) (RLTS 6.1);
- Opportunities for Total Mobility provision in Taihape (2006-07);
- Rail service opportunities and feasibility for the Region (2007-08) (RLTS 6.1);
- Concessionary fare opportunities onboard on all passenger transport modes to utilise available capacity (ongoing) (RLTS 6.3); and
- Extension of late night and weekend bus services in Palmerston North (2008).

Trial Services:

- improved Commuter Service Provision within Palmerston North and Wanganui (Aramoho trial in progress in Wanganui. Investigations have commenced in Palmerston North – trials and investigations will be ongoing) (RLTS 6.1); and
- review bus route/service operation in Palmerston North, including the introduction of bus service coverage between Roberts – James Line (2006/07 onwards) (RPTP Policy 4, in accordance with Table 13.1).

Policy 2

Horizons Regional Council will, where possible, provide funding assistance (as per Section 4.2) for passenger transport services which:

- meet the criteria set out in this Plan; and
- are not provided commercially.

Explanation

In addition to the guidelines specified here, a number of economic criteria need to be satisfied in order for a service to be subsidised by Horizons Regional Council. These criteria are discussed in Sections 4 and 5, with Section 4.3 outlining the ways services may be supported.

Some services may be provided at a satisfactory level, without requiring support from Horizons Regional Council, such as the taxi services. In these cases, there is no need for Horizons Regional Council to intervene.

2.4 Commercial Services in this Region

The majority of passenger transport services operating in our Region are provided by commercial operators, many without financial support from Horizons Regional Council. As these services operate independently, operators are able to use vehicles and set fares, timetables and routes as they see appropriate.

Horizons Regional Council will review a commercial service's operation if there are concerns that the service being provided is not meeting the transport needs of community. Horizons Regional Council assistance may then be required to improve the quality/level of service provided by a commercial operator, in order to meet these needs (as outlined in Policy 1).

Policy 3

Horizons Regional Council will only intervene in a commercial service where it considers the service could be improved for the benefit of the community (as per Policy 1).

Explanation

There is no need to intervene in a commercial service unless it is not able to meet its community's transport needs. Examples of this may include:

- commercial fare levels too high and deterring use;
- unsuitable vehicles;
- unsuitable timetables or routes; and/or
- infrequent or low level of service.

This review may include discussions with the commercial operators, current and potential passengers and other key stakeholders. If improvements cannot be made commercially, Horizons Regional Council may choose to intervene in the service by way of a concessionary fare scheme (in order to lower fares

and encourage use of the service), or to offer improved services by way of competitive tender and securing a contracted operator.

2.4.1 Taxi Services

Taxi services are a special part of the transport network, offering an individualized, on-demand, fully flexible form of public transport. For some communities in our region their services provide the only form of local public transport. In addition, they take part in the Total Mobility Scheme, providing transport for people with disabilities.

Commercial taxi services are operated in the following areas within the Manawatu-Wanganui region:

- Palmerston North
- Levin
- Taumarunui
- Wanganui
- Feilding
- Marton
- Foxton

All these services are considered to meet the criteria set out in Policy 1.

2.5 Long Distance Services

For the purpose of this Plan, a long distance service is defined as a service that has part of its journey outside this region. This includes both long-distance bus and rail services. Horizons Regional Council does not subsidise long-distance services, but acknowledges the importance of these services to the transport network. Section 2.3.2 includes an assessment of available capacity on long-distance and other commercial services. There may be opportunities to utilise spare capacity for short trips (within our Region), for residents of communities with recognized needs (meeting the criteria as set out in Policy 1). Such trips could be subsidised via a concessionary fare agreement.

3. Service Levels

3.1 Introduction

The aim of service level policies is to establish an appropriate minimum level of passenger transport services. These policies will apply to the urban services in Palmerston North and Wanganui.

Service levels on other services will be subject to local conditions, demand assessments and the community's willingness to pay. For further information regarding service levels for specified services, please refer to Annex C.

3.2 Service Level Guidelines

Policy 4

Horizons Regional Council will apply the service level guidelines set out in Table 3 below to the city bus services in Palmerston North and Wanganui.

Explanation

Service level guidelines are a method of achieving a consistent and equitable standard of service provision across the region.

The guidelines below provide a framework for the bus services in Palmerston North and Wanganui. The framework provides guidance for city coverage, times, frequencies, and infrastructure.

These services are considered to meet the criteria set out in Policy 1, therefore, if necessary, Horizons Regional Council will fund services in order to provide the level of service detailed below, as long as the community also supports the service level supplied.

Table 3: Service Level Guidelines

Aspect	Guideline
1. Service Area	Public transport services are to be provided throughout the Palmerston North and Wanganui urban areas, subject to suitable roads/routes existing, where demand reaches minimum levels (see Aspect 10, 11).
2. Access Distance (in a straight line)	At least 90% of residences within the urban area are to be within the following distances of a bus stop: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 500 metres – normal conditions• 600 metres – low density/outer areas

3. Service Period	<p>Normal service periods (start of first trip to start of last trip) are approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday-Thursday 0700 - 1800 • Friday 0700 - 1900 • Saturday 0900 - 1500 • Sunday 0900 - 1200 <p>Actual service periods on any route are subject to demand assessments – some routes will not warrant evening/weekend services for this reason.</p>
4. Peak Period Loadings and Frequencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak periods are considered to be 7.30am – 9.30am and 2.30pm – 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. • During these periods, bus services (on high demand routes as identified by demand assessments) should run approximately every 30 minutes, and achieve an average loading of 50% of the seated capacity. • Where average loadings exceed 90% of the seated capacity, then consideration should be given to increasing frequency of services.
5. Off-peak Period Loadings and Frequencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-peak periods are considered those outside of the peak hours specified above (including weekend services). • Bus services should run approximately every 60 minutes and achieve a minimum average loading of six passengers. • Where average loadings are higher than 50% of seated capacity, then consideration should be given to increasing the frequency of the trip. • Actual service frequencies on any route are subject to demand assessments – some routes will not warrant off peak services operating as regularly as outlined above.
6. Service Directness and Transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of passengers should not need to transfer more than once to reach destinations. • Transfer tickets shall be available on all services, and allow a maximum transfer time of two hours from the purchase of the ticket.
7. School Service Policy	<p>Horizons Regional Council will consider subsidising school special buses where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing route services are, or would be, overloaded by school students; • the provision of such a service is at least as economic as use of regularly scheduled services; • the service meets the criteria set out in Policy 1.
8. Bus Stop Spacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus stops are to be generally located where they best meet passenger needs, and safety, while still maintaining efficient operating times. • Placement of all bus stops is subject to traffic considerations and in coordination with the relevant road controlling authority.

9. Bus Stop Facilities	Priority for the installation of seats and shelters is to be given to stops that are regularly serviced, well patronized (or with the potential to be so) and/or exposed sites.
10. Services in New Development Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where residences, within the urban area, extend further than 600 metres from a bus route, a needs/demand assessment should be carried out. • Service trials should be introduced into these new development areas as soon as possible within funding, route and operator availability. • Trial periods for these services should normally be a minimum of 12 months with services achieving 50% of the required minimum loadings within six months of introduction. • Services will continue, provided the standard loadings are achieved within a two-year period.
11. Service Changes or New Services	Any new service or major service alteration should normally be subject to a minimum 12-month trial period and minimum loadings as in 10.
12. Vehicle Quality	Except in exceptional circumstances, at least 50% of services are to be provided by vehicles with low floored entranceways.

4. Funding

4.1 Funding Sources

Fares collected from passengers on a subsidised service meet only a proportion of the total costs of providing that service. Local ratepayers and Land Transport New Zealand provide the balance of the costs of the service. The rationale for public subsidy of passenger transport is that increased access and mobility and other benefits provide positive spin-offs for the community as a whole.

The funding of passenger transport is governed by the Transit New Zealand Act 1989. It allows regional councils to make payments for passenger transport services and to receive funding from central government. Land Transport New Zealand is the central government agency that allocates funding for passenger transport (together with projects for roading and road safety) in its National Land Transport Programme.

The total passenger transport budget of Horizons Regional Council for 2006/07 is approximately \$2.5m. Of this, ratepayers contributed approximately \$1m (40%) and Land Transport New Zealand contributed approximately 1.2m (50%). Contributions from other organisations cover the remaining 10%.

A breakdown of Horizons Regional Council's passenger transport budget for the 2006-07 year is shown at Annex D.

Policy 5

Horizons Regional Council will continue to seek funding from central government and other sources for passenger transport.

Explanation

Due to the recognized social, community, environmental and road-user benefits resulting from passenger transport use; it is appropriate that central government agencies meet a share of the costs of subsidising it (where necessary). This funding need not necessarily come from Land Transport New Zealand; other agencies such as the Ministry of Social Development or Health might be appropriate sources of funds.

Contributions from other agencies might also be appropriate. Currently UCOL and Massey University, as beneficiaries of the implementation of specific public transport projects, contribute to passenger transport services in Palmerston North and Wanganui. Additionally, a number of the community services supported by Horizons Regional Council receive funding from other organisations.

Policy 6

Horizons Regional Council will investigate and encourage alternative sources of funding for passenger transport projects.

Explanation

In recent years, Horizons Regional Council has increasingly sought funding from organisations which stand to benefit from passenger transport projects. This is discussed further in Section 4.4. Additionally, Land Transport New Zealand regularly reviews its level of funding for passenger transport. These reviews may alter the funding available. If this occurs, alternative sources of funding will be needed if the same level of service is to continue. Funding options could include:

- petrol tax;
- parking revenue;
- targeted funding from agencies who have shifted support for transport services to regional councils; or
- central Government agencies such as the Ministry of Health and/or Social Development.

4.2 Types of Funding Support

Horizons Regional Council provides two types of financial support for passenger services within the Manawatu-Wanganui region:

- payments to the operator through contracted services; and
- payments to the passenger through:
 - concessionary fare schemes which provide discounted fares on commercial services for certain groups of users.
 - the Total Mobility Scheme which provides a discount on taxi fares to people who, because of a disability, have impaired use of conventional public transport.

4.3 The Source of Rate Funding

Currently Horizons Regional Council raises the local share of the cost of a service from the district in which the service operates. This Plan continues that policy.

Policy 7

The rating contribution to a subsidised service (including administration costs) will be funded by the ratepayers of the district in which the service operates. Where a service runs from one district to another, the costs will be shared equally.

Explanation

Subsidies are only provided where passengers and the surrounding community benefit from the service. Therefore, as per Horizons Regional Council Revenue and Financing Policy, ratepayers in the area where the service operates should provide the subsidy. The level of administration cost is related to the service and therefore the ratepayer contribution to this cost should also come from the area in which the service operates. For example, ratepayer subsidies for any Wanganui services would be provided by the ratepayers of Wanganui. In areas where services run through one or more districts, such as the Taihape to Palmerston North/Wanganui Bus, districts should share the cost of the service.

Once the costs for each district and city have been calculated, Horizons Regional Council collects the funds through targeted Transport rates.

4.4 Other Sources of Funding

Horizons Regional Council will continue to investigate projects and trials such as Unlimited Access schemes which allow certain groups of the population “free” access to agreed bus services. Such a scheme exists on the Palmerston North and Wanganui bus services where UCOL staff and students are able to travel free on all city bus services in Palmerston North and Wanganui. UCOL contributes to the cost of the scheme.

Massey University is currently undertaking an Unlimited Access trial in Palmerston North. The two-year trial is scheduled to be completed in February 2007. Results from the first year of operation show that usage of the bus services has dramatically increased and parking congestion has been significantly reduced at the University.

Horizons Regional Council will continue to adopt and expand this method of developing and funding services that recognizes the benefits of improved public transport for each funding party.

5. Fares

5.1 Factors Influencing Fares

Horizons Regional Council contracts for passenger transport services will specify the maximum fares to be charged. These fares will be set at a level which will attract passengers to the service, encourage patronage growth and contribute towards the costs of providing the service.

Independent operators (those operating without Horizons Regional Council support) are able to set fares as they see appropriate. However, Horizons Regional Council may consider intervening in a commercial service if it considers that the quality of the commercial service (including the full fare level) is deterring potential passengers.

5.2 Cost Recovery on Contracted Services

There are two issues associated with fare structures:

- the fare level in dollar terms; and
- the balance between fares and subsidies.

Policy 8

In determining the fares to be set on contracted services, Horizons Regional Council will consider the following factors:

Fares should:

- cover 40%-60% of the costs of providing the service, unless the benefits (as stated in Policy 1) of a lower ratio clearly outweigh the extra subsidy costs incurred;
- should be set at a consistent level across the region; and
- at a price that is competitive with private vehicle operating costs.

Explanation

The 40%-60% cost recovery figure sets a limit for ratepayer input and recognises that there will also be benefits to the non-users, and that they should contribute towards the cost of the service. It also provides for passengers to contribute to approximately half the costs of any service.

If this guideline cannot be met, then consideration will be given to the benefits of providing the service (as set out in Policy 1). In some cases, following a review of these factors, a service with a lower cost recovery rate may be acceptable. An example could be a community service, where the population has few other transport options in order to access health or other services in another centre (RLTS 6.3). Another example may be commuter services, where fares may need to be lower in order to encourage private car users onto the bus. In this case the environmental and economic benefits of the service

to the community may outweigh the increased cost of the service to ratepayers.

However, Horizons Regional Council will endeavour to ensure that the community concerned is willing to pay the higher costs of the service.

If the benefits are not considered to outweigh the higher subsidy, efforts will be made to improve the service's cost recovery rate. These may include: promotion, increasing fares, reducing the level of service provided, reducing kilometres travelled or changing the vehicles used. If these alterations do not improve the service's performance, consideration will be given to discontinuing the service.

If, over time, fare contributions come to exceed 60% of the cost of the service, then consideration may be given to reducing fares, increasing levels of service or other quality improvements, if such improvements are warranted and would be likely to result in further patronage growth. This assistance could then contribute to increasing the viability of the service and result in lower subsidy costs in the future.

Policy 9

Trial services will be expected to achieve at least 50% of the required passengers within six months of operation, with services expected to reach the minimum revenue recovery rate within the trial period (subject to Policy 8).

Horizons Regional Council recognizes that passenger numbers on trial services may be low until awareness of the service increases and regular passengers are established, therefore trials may require a higher level of subsidy during this initial period. Horizons Regional Council will make every effort to work with relevant councils and communities to publicise and promote trial services to ensure that those people who might use the service know about it, with the aim of encouraging new users.

However, if demand remains at a level where subsidy is unacceptably high, the service trial will be discontinued.

Policy 10

Horizons Regional Council will regularly review fare structures on services within the region.

Explanation

To ensure a subsidised service continually meets the need for which it was established, and to ensure compliance with the policies in this plan, fares will be regularly reviewed. Service performance, including fare and revenue recovery rate information, is reported to the Passenger Transport Subcommittee every six months. Fares should also be reviewed in light of cost increases. Fares for services across the region should also be comparable.

Fare levels on commercial services will also be reviewed. In recognition of the important role these services play in our region, Horizons Regional Council will work with commercial operators to ensure fares on these services are set at acceptable levels for the communities they serve, with the aim being to retain commercial operators in our region and increase patronage.

However, Horizons Regional Council may intervene in a commercial service if it considers that the quality of the commercial service (including the full fare level) is deterring potential passengers.

5.3 Fares for Contracted Services

Horizons Regional Council sets fares for contracted services. In doing this, Horizons Regional Council will follow Policy 8.

Policy 11

Horizons Regional Council favours a fixed fare system for short distance services (such as urban services), where the fare is the same regardless of distance travelled. For longer services fares should be linked to distance travelled and competitive with private, single-occupant vehicle operating costs.

Explanation

Fixed fare systems, where the fare is the same regardless of the length of the journey, currently operate on city bus services in Palmerston North. These systems are simple to operate and easy for passengers to use. However they are not appropriate for longer distance services, such as those between Levin and Palmerston North or Taihape and Wanganui.

In order to promote public transport use for current car users, particularly making services more attractive for commuters, fares should be set at a level that is competitive with using a private vehicle.

Policy 12

Horizons Regional Council will ensure that, where appropriate, lower than full adult fares are in place for children, the elderly, beneficiaries, students, and people with disabilities on contracted services.

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council will endeavour to provide lower fares for the following groups:

- Children Children attending primary or secondary school.
- Students Any student attending a tertiary education institute such as University, Polytechnic, Teachers College, etc.
- Beneficiaries Anyone receiving any kind of government benefit – eg. unemployment, domestic purposes, superannuation, etc.

- The Elderly Those people aged over 65 years of age.
- People with Disabilities This refers to those people with physical, intellectual or psychological disabilities.

Policy 13

As a general principal, the amount of the discount should be as follows:

- students, beneficiaries, the elderly, and people with disabilities – one third;
- children – half; and
- children under five years of age – free provided they sit on their caregiver’s lap.

Explanation

These figures are based on previous discount levels. The actual discount will always depend on the amount of the full fare. There may be circumstances for example where, because the full fare is relatively low, the discount levels may be less than one third and one half, or may not even exist.

5.4 Fares for Commercial Services

Horizons Regional Council can only specify fares charged on contracted services and cannot control fares charged for commercial services. Similarly Horizons Regional Council does not specify fares for on-demand type services (such as taxis) or long-distance services.

However, Horizons Regional Council can influence how much some passengers pay through the use of concessionary fare schemes. Concession fares are lower than the full fare and may be made available to certain groups, such as children, beneficiaries, the elderly and people with disabilities. Under such a concession fare scheme, Horizons Regional Council reimburses the provider of the service the difference between the full fare and the concessionary fare for each eligible passenger.

Horizons Regional Council may consider intervening in a commercial service if it considers that the quality of the commercial service (including the full fare level) is deterring potential passengers.

5.4.1 Concession Fares

Policy 14

A concessionary fare scheme may be implemented where Horizons Regional Council considers that the fare levels on an otherwise unsubsidised service are a barrier to those who are transport-disadvantaged.

Explanation

Participation in the concessionary fare scheme depends on whether or not Horizons Regional Council is satisfied with the level of fares and if concessions are already provided. Several commercial services already provide their own discounted travel for passengers and/or their fares are

considered reasonable. Therefore they are not subsidised by Horizons Regional Council.

Horizons Regional Council, when deciding if the fares are a barrier, will also consider if the operator is providing the service in the most cost-effective manner, as this may be a factor in high fares.

Policy 15

Before implementing a concessionary fare scheme, Horizons Regional Council will ensure that the introduction of such a scheme is the most efficient method of improving the service.

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council needs to be sure that implementing the concessionary fare scheme is the best use of its money and is the most appropriate way of meeting its objectives. It may be better to tender and contract the service.

Policy 16

Transport providers wishing to participate in a concessionary fare scheme must first have their service approved by Horizons Regional Council. In considering approval, Horizons Regional Council will consider the need for the service, the quality of the service, the service levels provided and the proposed fare levels.

Explanation

This aims to ensure that the service provided is to a required standard. This standard will be set by Horizons Regional Council. A service that is below the required standard in terms of service levels, quality and price, may not be approved for inclusion in a concessionary fare scheme. This may apply even if it is the sole service provider and/or had previously participated in the scheme. Where a new service is proposed to compete with an existing service, the proposed service must at least meet the standards of the existing service to qualify for participation in the scheme.

Policy 17

The amount and delivery of the concessionary fares will be decided by Horizons Regional Council, after considering:

- advice from representatives of transport operators and passengers; and
- any similar concession fares already in existence.

Explanation

It is appropriate to consult with the providers and users of a service when establishing the amount and delivery of concession fares. The final decision must rest with Horizons Regional Council however, and take into consideration other services (commercial and contracted) and concessionary fare schemes already in existence in the region.

5.4.2 Community Transport

Many areas do not have the population to sustain a conventional public transport or taxi service. Often a transport service is provided by volunteers from community organisations and operated on a non-profit basis.

Horizons Regional Council recognises the important role of such volunteer services in communities where transport services for people with special needs are limited. In addition, these volunteer transport services often link the community with amenities and health services in larger centres.

5.4.2.1 Community Transport Concession Fare Schemes

Passengers using these services are typically the elderly, beneficiaries and people with disabilities. Horizons Regional Council can assist these passengers through a concessionary fare scheme, which provides a subsidy for each eligible passenger.

Horizons Regional Council currently provides concessionary fares on a number of community-run transport services. These include:

- Dannevirke St John Service;
- Feilding St John Service;
- Foxton Beach Community Centre;
- Foxton-Foxton Beach Bus;
- Freedom Mobility;
- Horowhenua Community Bus;
- Levin Community Services;
- Mobility Plus;
- Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation; and
- Taumarunui Mobility Van Society.

Policy 18

Horizons Regional Council will support community organisations that provide transport services for those who are transport-disadvantaged provided Horizons Regional Council is satisfied that:

- the services provided meet the criteria in Policy 1;
- the organisation needs financial support;
- the organisation is efficient;
- the organisation uses its funding wisely; and
- all vehicles and drivers used by the organisation are appropriately licensed.

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council needs to ensure that funding provided by Land Transport New Zealand and ratepayers is used appropriately. Therefore, community organisations will need to show that Horizons Regional Council funding will be used wisely and efficiently to provide services that meet the criteria in Policy 1. Horizons Regional Council assistance may include the provision of management advice.

A major problem faced by community organisations is financing vehicle replacement. Funding from Horizons Regional Council can be saved for vehicle replacement. If the organisation ceases to exist and Council funds have not been used for the intended purpose then they must be returned.

Similarly, if a vehicle purchased with Horizons Regional Council funds is sold, Horizons Regional Council may require the return of its share of the proceeds.

5.4.3 Concessionary Fare Agreements

Policy 19

All services supported by Horizons Regional Council under a concessionary fare scheme:

- will have participation in the scheme approved by the Passenger Transport Subcommittee;
- must meet the Passenger Transport Plan criteria (Policy 1) for support;
- must operate under a signed Concessionary Fare Scheme Agreement;
- must supply Annual Reports and Annual Accounts if requested;
- will be reviewed annually;
- may have their participation terminated by the Council, at the time of the annual review, on giving three months prior notification; and
- will specify a maximum amount of subsidy payable in any year.

Explanation

Concessionary Fare Agreements formalise any arrangement between Horizons Regional Council and the provider of the service. The agreement defines the terms and conditions for payment.

5.5 Transfer Tickets

Policy 20

Horizons Regional Council will ensure the availability of across-town transfer tickets where possible on Palmerston North and Wanganui city bus services.

Explanation

Transfer tickets allow cross-town passengers to transfer from one service to another without having to pay for two full fares.

5.6 Bulk Purchase Trips

Policy 21

Horizons Regional Council will provide bulk purchase trips where possible on subsidised bus services.

Explanation

The availability of bulk purchase trips reward frequent travellers with discounted travel.

On Palmerston North and Wanganui city services, discounted trips are currently available through the use of Wayfarer smartcard systems called *GoCards*. These operate as prepaid travel cards.

On commuter services, discounted 10 trip tickets will be available for purchase.

For smaller services (those which operate less than five days per week), the need for bulk purchase trips will be assessed individually and will take into consideration Policy 8.

5.7 Free Bus Services

Services allowing free travel will be considered where there are clear advantages from such a service. Advantages might be environmental, in the form of reduced inner-city congestion, reduced vehicle emissions, or reduction in demand for parking.

Where a free service is provided, an organization representing the passengers will contribute towards the cost of the travel as appropriate. For example, the cost of Unlimited Access Schemes, currently being provided for Massey University and UCOL students and staff, is contributed to by these organisations.

6. Tendering and Contracting

6.1 Introduction

Section 20 of the Transit New Zealand Act specifies that tendering and contracting procedures must adhere to Land Transport New Zealand's "Competitive Pricing Procedures". These procedures cover matters such as tender size, contract period, tender evaluation and variations to the level of service during the contract period. The Competitive Pricing Procedures also allow Regional Councils to develop alternative tendering and contracting methods. Any alternative method must be approved by Land Transport New Zealand.

At the time of writing, Ministry of Transport was undertaking a review of the Transport Licensing Act and Land Transport New Zealand reviewing the procurement procedures for public passenger transport services. Once the findings of these reviews are known, amendments will be made to the Passenger Transport Plan if necessary.

Horizons Regional Council currently has contracts for the following services:

- Wanganui City Services;
- Wanganui Castlecliff School Overload Services;
- Taihape – Wanganui/Palmerston North;
- Levin Round Town Services;
- Levin – Palmerston North Commuter Services;
- Ashhurst – Palmerston North;
- Linton – Palmerston North;
- Raetihi – Ohakune;
- Marton – Palmerston North Commuter (Trial); and
- Massey Unlimited Access Additional Services (Trial).

Once a decision to tender a service has been made, Horizons Regional Council must decide on many issues relating to the contract to be tendered. These are discussed below.

Additionally, Horizons Regional Council will maintain a Contracting Manual which will apply to all contracts. The Contracting Manual outlines the service performance standards (or required quality of service) for Horizons Regional Council contracts.

6.2 Contract Type

There are two types of contracts available for Horizons Regional Council to use:

Gross Contracts: The operator takes no risk for passenger fares, tendering a price based on the full cost of the service, with Horizons Regional Council receiving the passenger fares.

Net Contracts: The operator takes the risk for the passenger fares, tendering a price based on the operator's full cost of the service and the operator's fare revenue estimate; with the operator retaining the passenger fares.

Policy 22

Horizons Regional Council will favour contracting on a net basis, especially when passenger numbers are available unless there are clear benefits to the use of a gross contract.

Explanation

Net contracts tend to encourage the contractor to provide the best possible service and thereby increase revenue (which is retained by the contractor).

Net contracts require accurate passenger numbers and often this is not available. For example, a net contract would be inappropriate for the provision of a trial service. A gross contract would be more suitable in this case.

Under a gross contract, there are no benefits or incentives for the operator to improve the service as any fare revenue goes to the Council. However, there are a number of other possible benefits to gross contracts including increased control over the network for the tendering authority, more competitive tendering, and the simpler provision of integrated ticketing. Therefore, in some cases a gross contract may be considered in order to meet the aims of the service provision.

6.3 Contract Length

Policy 23

Horizons Regional Council will favour:

- long contract periods for established services; and
- short contract periods for new or trial services.

Explanation

The Competitive Pricing Procedures specify that contracts may be between one to five years. Long contracts provide more security to the contractor. It also allows a greater period over which to spread costs and thus may encourage lower prices. Shorter-term contracts are more appropriate for a new or trial service where the future is less clear.

Horizons Regional Council contracts normally range from one year for trial services (gross contracts), to three to five years for more established services (net contracts).

6.4 Vehicle Issues

6.4.1 Quality

Horizons Regional Council will use the Bus and Coach Association “Vehicle Quality Standards”, or similar, in its tender documents to ensure a high standard of vehicle is used on contracted services. These standards set a minimum quality standard that must apply throughout the duration of the contract. The standards apply to the individual vehicles and to the vehicle fleet. The fleet profile requires at least a certain percentage of the fleet to meet higher standards than the minimum individual vehicle requirement. It allows for the introduction of new vehicles onto contracted services, so long as each vehicle meets the minimum standard, and the fleet continues to meet the required profile.

Buses used to provide the Palmerston North urban services currently meet Euro Standard 2 or better. Horizons Regional Council will take into account emissions standards through the quality assessment portion of its tender evaluation process.

6.4.2 Age

It is unlikely that a minimum vehicle age will be specified in contracts. While age can be a useful proxy for quality, age is a factor measured in the Vehicle Quality Standards and this method of control is preferred.

Horizons Regional Council will encourage the regular maintenance, upgrading and replacement of older vehicles.

6.4.3 Size

The minimum vehicle size will be specified in tender documents. Horizons Regional Council will continue to try to match demand levels with vehicle size.

6.4.4 Accessibility

Access onto some public transport vehicles can be impaired for some user groups (such as the elderly or those with disabilities) due to obstacles such as high steps or a lack of handrails.

Horizons Regional Council recognizes that improvements to accessibility benefit all passengers. For example, parents with young children are able to use low-floored buses more easily. Palmerston North urban buses are currently wheelchair-accessible, with buses servicing the Massey University routes being progressively upgraded.

The availability of suitable vehicles, and the significant investment required by operators, has hindered the introduction of wheelchair-accessible vehicles on some routes. However suitable vehicles are becoming increasingly available.

Policy 24

Horizons Regional Council will encourage the provision of accessible services through the weighting given to vehicle access in its contract tender documents.

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council aspires to provide accessible services wherever possible, however is mindful that budgetary constraints and availability of these vehicles (especially wheelchair-accessible) will mean advancements in accessibility will be an ongoing process.

Horizons Regional Council when tendering urban bus services in our region, will call for tenders for both wheelchair-accessible buses and non-wheelchair-accessible buses to ascertain the price for the two, and to allow a choice to be made in full knowledge of the costs.

6.4.5 Livery

Buses should be painted in an attractive colour scheme to suit the city in which it operates.

Horizons Regional Council favours the use of branding the buses to the particular city.

Horizons Regional Council does not favour all-over bus advertising, and will generally only approve advertising on the rear of the bus.

6.5 Tender Evaluation

Horizons Regional Council will favour the quality-price trade-off method of tender evaluation. This method considers both price and quality when evaluating tenders, with the best tender being the one with the best balance between price and quality.

Minimum standards will apply in all tenders.

Vehicle quality standards should specify the minimum qualifying quality, with extra points to be given for improvements over and above this level.

Wherever possible, an independent person will be used as part of the tender evaluation process.

6.6 Operator Standards

Horizons Regional Council will encourage contractors to be ISO or similarly certified. This will be a factor in tender evaluation.

6.7 Service Performance Standards

Horizons Regional Council contracts will contain performance standards which specify certain minimum performance standards which the contractor must maintain.

6.8 Patronage and Revenue Information

Horizons Regional Council will endeavour to provide passenger and/or revenue information in its tender documents. This allows more opportunity for potential tenderers and is likely to result in better tender prices.

6.9 Bonds

Performance bonds will generally not be required from contractors.

6.10 Indexation

Inflation adjustment of long-term contracts is an issue, particularly in times of rapidly changing costs. Contracts of longer than one year may be indexed to the Land Transport New Zealand index.

6.11 Ticket Machines

It will generally be a contract requirement that buses used on contracted services have ticket machines capable of providing Horizons Regional Council with passenger information.

Electronic ticketing machines (such as the Wayfarer machines used in Palmerston North and Wanganui which allow for the use of a reusable, prepaid, contactless travel card, called a *GoCard*) provide detailed passenger information and are a requirement of larger contracts. The requirements for other services are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Integrated ticketing (whereby a passenger can switch between service providers and routes using the same ticket) will be investigated as a service improvement where possible. Currently passengers on Wanganui and Palmerston North bus services can use their *GoCards* on either service.

6.12 Production of Timetables

Horizons Regional Council believes that good quality timetables are an essential part of providing a passenger transport service.

Horizons Regional Council will generally produce the first timetable for a service, and then after that it is expected (especially in the case of net contracts) that the cost will be shared equally between the contractor and Horizons Regional Council.

6.13 Safety

Horizons Regional Council will promote high standards of safety and service quality.

Safety issues will be considered in the tender evaluation process.

6.14 Aggregation of Services

The current contracts in Wanganui and Levin are a city-wide ones. Horizons Regional has the option of splitting up these contracts, perhaps on a route by route basis. However our experience to date has indicated that there are many advantages, such as price, administration, and ticketing, of keeping city-wide contracts.

Horizons Regional Council prefers to maintain urban bus services as citywide contracts.

7. Total Mobility Scheme

The Total Mobility 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 a subsidized door-to-door transport service wherever Scheme transport providers operate. The Scheme provides a discount on taxi fares using existing taxi fleets, including vans equipped with ramps or hoists for carrying people in wheelchairs.

In this region the Total Mobility Scheme operates in Palmerston North, Wanganui, Levin, Feilding, Marton, Foxton and Taumarunui.

At the time of writing, Ministry of Transport had completed a review of the Total Mobility Scheme with its recommendations being actioned in Phases. Horizons Regional Council has adopted the recommendations of Phase 1; the majority of these were already common practice for Horizons Regional Council. The most significant change has been the introduction of access to the Scheme for those with temporary impairments. Phase 2, which includes revising voucher usage and the assessment process, will be considered for implementation in 2006-07 and the Plan updated if necessary.

Other enhancements of the Scheme, such as the introduction of swipe card technology, are also under investigation at a regional level.

7.1 How Total Mobility Operates

The Total Mobility Scheme operates with a system of vouchers. Every person assessed as eligible for the Scheme is issued with a uniquely coded voucher book and a photographic identification card. These vouchers are much like a chequebook with a tear-off portion and a stub to keep a record of trips taken.

Horizons Regional Council prints the voucher books. Each book contains 25 vouchers, and each voucher has a space for all details of the trip to be recorded.

The voucher holder hires the taxi in the usual manner. At the conclusion of each trip, the passenger fills in details of the journey, the date and then signs each voucher. The driver also signs the voucher and records the total fare and the discount. The passenger gives the tear-off portion and the balance of the fare, once the discount has been deducted, to the driver. The passenger keeps the details of the trip and fare on the stub. The driver sends the vouchers to Horizons Regional Council for reimbursement.

Horizons Regional Council provides agencies with voucher books who then issue individual books to people they have assessed as eligible. The voucher holder pays a discounted fare to the taxi driver at the end of the journey. Horizons Regional Council pays the balance.

Horizons Regional Council funds and administers the Total Mobility Scheme. This involves the printing and distribution of vouchers to agencies, overall management of the Scheme, and payment to taxi organisations of the agreed level of discount.

Horizons Regional Council employs a Total Mobility Coordinator to administer the Scheme.

Each centre that operates a Total Mobility Scheme has an advisory committee, which comprises of representatives from agencies who issue vouchers, Horizons Regional Council, taxi operators and users of the scheme. The committee is also responsible for providing advice to Horizons Regional Council on the operation of the Scheme and assisting in the development of local policies and planning for future needs. The committee comprises representatives from agencies who issue vouchers, users of the Scheme, Horizons Regional Council and taxi operators.

In 2006-07 the Regional Council has a budget of \$578,000 for Total Mobility in the region.

Policy 25

Horizons Regional Council will continue to support the operation of the Total Mobility Scheme in towns within the Manawatu-Wanganui region.

Explanation

The Total Mobility Scheme meets the criteria set out in this Plan for supporting a transport service. In addition to providing funding support, Horizons Regional Council also manages the Total Mobility Scheme.

Policy 26

Horizons Regional Council will subsidise eligible Total Mobility trips by 50%, but may set limits on the number of vouchers used in order to manage expenditure levels.

Explanation

The level of subsidy that applies nationally is 50%. Horizons Regional Council may limit the number of vouchers available to be used in order to maintain budgets.

7.2 Eligibility

The eligibility criteria for the Total Mobility Scheme is based on a level of disability which impairs the use of conventional buses.

Policy 27

An eligible person must have an impairment that prevents them from undertaking any one or more of the following five components of a journey unaccompanied, on a bus, train, ferry in a safe and dignified manner:

- Getting to the place from where the transport departs
- Getting on to the transport
- Riding securely
- Getting off the transport
- Getting to the destination

Explanation

These criteria have been adopted by Land Transport New Zealand and apply nationally.

Examples of disabilities that meet the Total Mobility criteria include:

- inability to walk to the nearest bus stop;
- dependence on a wheelchair or walker;
- severe visual impairment; and
- intellectual, cognitive or psychiatric disabilities needing the assistance of another person for travel on public transport.

Eligibility to participate in the Scheme is controlled by assessors under the guidance of the Total Mobility Coordinator. The assessors are in most instances part of a disability organisation. This organisation then becomes known as the issuing agency. The assessment involves an interview and in some instances completion of a medical certificate by a doctor. Only those people who are found to meet and continue to meet the criteria may participate in the Scheme.

7.2.1 Assessing and Issuing Agencies

A degree of disability knowledge is needed for competent assessment of Total Mobility eligibility. Those people who have an understanding of disabilities, and the effect that that disability has on an individual's transport needs, are considered the most appropriate people to be Total Mobility assessors.

Policy 28

Horizons Regional Council will use disability agencies or appropriate individuals to assess eligibility to participate in the Total Mobility Scheme.

Explanation

Assessors will usually be working within a disability organisation, and/or have a high profile in the community in relation to disabilities. Often an assessor will be a fieldworker for a disability organisation.

Once an agency or individual has satisfied Horizons Regional Council of their ability to assess eligible people, an assessor agreement must be signed. The agreement details the guidelines for assessment and the responsibilities of the agency/individual and Horizons Regional Council.

Agencies/individuals who regularly assess and issue Total Mobility vouchers must be represented on the Total Mobility advisory committee in that town. Other disability organisations and individuals may also be represented on the advisory committee as permanent members or when requested by the advisory committee or Horizons Regional Council.

Agencies and individuals are required to keep accurate records of voucher distribution and are encouraged to use the voucher track database supplied by Horizons Regional Council.

7.2.2 Eligibility Appeals

Policy 29

Every person who applies for, and is declined, participation in the Total Mobility Scheme has the right of appeal

Explanation

Appeals can be presented either orally or in writing (via Horizons Regional Council) to the local Total Mobility advisory committee. The appeal must be received within three months of the original application to participate in the Scheme. The committee will decide on the person's eligibility.

7.3 Taxi Companies

Policy 30

All taxi organisations who participate in the Total Mobility Scheme must first be approved by the Total Mobility advisory committee and must sign the participation agreement with Horizons Regional Council.

Explanation

When considering an application from a taxi organization to participate in the Total Mobility scheme, the advisory committee will have to satisfy itself that an adequate level of service to Total Mobility passengers will be provided. This may include ensuring that drivers are suitably trained to assist passengers. A stand-down period of six months may be applied or until such time as this has been demonstrated.

The participation agreement covers issues such as acceptance of reimbursement of vouchers, driver training, and attendance at Total Mobility advisory committee meetings. It also provides for 5% to be added to the total monthly invoice to enable the taxi operator to recover administration costs in processing Total Mobility vouchers.

The agreement will help ensure a quality service is provided to people using Total Mobility vouchers. It also preserves equity between operators within the region.

7.4 Provision of Wheelchair – Carrying Vehicles

An important part of the Total Mobility Scheme is the provision of wheelchair-accessible vehicles within the taxi fleet.

Policy 31

Horizons Regional Council may provide funding for the installation of ramps or hoists in wheelchair-accessible vehicles on the following basis:

- there must be a proven demand for the service;
- all costs and vehicle specifications must have the prior approval of Horizons Regional Council;
- the van owner and/or taxi company must sign a suspensory loan agreement;
- the driver of the van must participate in Total Mobility passenger training approved by Horizons Regional Council; and
- funds are available to Horizons Regional Council to meet installation costs.

Explanation

Wheelchair-bound passengers are often unable to use conventional taxis. In areas with sufficient demand Horizons Regional Council has assisted taxi operators to provide a taxi van capable of carrying wheelchairs. This arrangement has traditionally involved the taxi operator buying a van and Horizons Regional Council assisting in funding modifications to the van to enable wheelchair access. This usually involves the installation of a ramp or hoist and modification of the van interior.

It is important that the prospective van is suitable for carrying passengers using wheelchairs or scooters, has a long wheelbase, a high roof and is able to carry a minimum of two wheelchairs.

If the vehicle is second-hand, Horizons Regional Council may require the vehicle to undergo inspection to verify its mileage and general condition, before proceeding with a funding decision.

The cost of the modifications vary depending on van type and extent of modifications required. The current cost is approximately \$20,000 per modification. This investment is usually secured by a suspensory loan arrangement with the van owner or taxi organisation.

The suspensory loan agreement requires the repayment of monies or transfer of the suspensory loan under circumstances whereby:

- the van is sold; or
- the owner fails to comply with the terms of the agreement; or
- the owner or company becomes bankrupt or insolvent; or

- distress or execution is levied or issued against the vehicle or modifications.

The loan is written off after a period of time provided the van is used for its intended purpose.

Horizons Regional Council may provide funding to transfer the hoist/ramp to another vehicle after the term of the loan has expired.

Horizons Regional Council will make decisions regarding the need for a wheelchair van and any payment for modifications after receiving advice regarding demand from the advisory committee and confirmation of available funds.

7.5 Advisory Committees

Policy 32

Horizons Regional Council will establish advisory committees in each town where Total Mobility operates to oversee the operation of the Scheme.

Explanation

Advisory committees will include a representative from:

- Agencies who distribute voucher books.
- Taxi operators.
- Horizons Regional Council.
- Other appropriate agencies.

The advisory committees, responsibilities are to:

- provide feedback from users of the Scheme to Horizons Regional Council and taxi operators;
- make recommendations to Horizons Regional Council on local budget levels;
- monitor Scheme expenditure and ensure the Scheme operates within budget;
- provide local knowledge that will assist in resolving any problems with the Scheme; and
- provide a forum to discuss issues and concerns that impact on the transport needs of those with disabilities.

The advisory committees normally meet six-monthly or more frequently as the need arises.

7.6 Funding

Policy 33

Horizons Regional Council will, in consultation with the advisory committees, set an annual budget, and monitor and control expenditure for the operation of the Scheme in each centre.

Explanation

The Total Mobility Scheme is funded by Horizons Regional Council and Land Transport New Zealand. Budgets are set each year for each centre according to projected usage.

Use of the Scheme has grown dramatically and this has placed pressure on budgets. The advisory committee may recommend to Horizons Regional Council that local usage restrictions apply and be updated to assist in keeping the Scheme within budget.

These local rules may include limits on the number of vouchers available each month to the Total Mobility user (per Policy 26).

8. Registration of Passenger Services

8.1 Who Needs to Register

The Transport Services Licensing Act 1989 requires that any operator intending to operate a commercial passenger service in the Manawatu-Wanganui region must register that service with Horizons Regional Council at least 21 days prior to the commencement of that service. This includes taxi services and any long distance service that picks up or sets down within this Region. Registration forms are available from Horizons Regional Council

Services that are not required to register are:

- services which do not pick up or set down passengers in the Manawatu-Wanganui region;
- any service that is not available to the public generally; or
- any charter of a large passenger service vehicle.

Horizons Regional Council can decline to register a service where it:

- “(a) *Is likely to have a material adverse effect on the financial viability of any contracted service; or*
- (b) *Is likely to increase the net cost to the regional council of any contracted service; or*
- (c) *Is contrary to sound traffic management or any other environmental factor identified by the regional council as being of importance to its region.”*

(Section 49, Transport Services Licensing Act 1989)

Horizons Regional Council will consider all these matters. Its powers are discretionary under the legislation but it also has an obligation to protect its contracts and contractors.

Policy 34

Horizons Regional Council will refuse to register a passenger service if all or any part of the proposed service would affect the viability of any contracted service.

Explanation

Contractors with fixed price contracts should be protected from competition on all or part of their contracted service for the duration of the contract.

Horizons Regional Council has not identified any environmental or traffic management factors that would lead it to decline an application to register a service. However, Horizons Regional Council will seek advice from the relevant city or district council on these factors and may decline registration if Horizons Regional Council considers it appropriate.

8.2 Taxi Service Registrations

Section 22 of the Transport Services Licensing Act requires all taxi organisations to operate 24-hours a day, seven days a week, unless an exemption has been obtained from Horizons Regional Council

Horizons Regional Council may allow a lesser period *"if in the opinion of the regional council, public demand does not require such a level of service"* (Section 22(2)).

Such an exemption:

- (a) *May be subject to such conditions as the regional council may specify;*
- (b) *May be granted, revoked or modified by the regional council at any time, after giving such notice and such opportunity to make submissions on the matter as may be reasonable in all the circumstances to both -*
 - (i) *The approved taxi organisation concerned; and*
 - (ii) *Any other approved taxi organisation that may be affected by the proposed grant, revocation or modification of the exemption.*

(Section 22(3))

Policy 35

When considering a request from a taxi operator for an exemption from providing a 24-hour seven day a week service, Horizons Regional Council will have regard to the following:

- that public demand for the taxi service warrants the exemptions sought; and
- the hours of operation of other taxi services in the area.

Explanation

Taxi services operate commercially and are sustained by the demand for their service in each centre. In some of this region's smaller centres, it is not possible for taxi services to operate commercially 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The level of demand may also be such that a 24-hour service is not needed.

Each application for an exemption will be considered on its merits. Where a new operator wishes to operate in the same area as another taxi company, then the minimum level of service required will generally be that provided by the existing operator.

9. Monitoring of Services

9.1 Monitoring

Horizons Regional Council regularly monitors and surveys existing and potential services within the region. Transport service monitoring includes seeking passenger feedback, checking adherence to timetables, and compliance with contract conditions. Horizons Regional Council has developed a monitoring strategy detailing how services should be monitored. Information gathered through customer satisfaction surveys is supplied to Land Transport New Zealand.

Policy 36

Horizons Regional Council will maintain and follow a monitoring strategy that sets out:

- which services will be monitored;
- how the services will be monitored;
- what will be monitored (adherence to timetable, routes, etc.); and
- how frequently services will be monitored.

Explanation

Monitoring needs to be carried out in a regular and structured manner. Horizons Regional Council has developed a monitoring programme that addresses this need. If concerns are raised regarding the operation of a contracted service, the frequency of monitoring will be increased.

Policy 37

Horizons Regional Council will regularly seek the views of the passengers, non-passengers and the local city or district council when monitoring passenger services, to ensure that the transport needs of all groups are identified.

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council undertakes surveys of passengers by various means on a variety of transport services to obtain their views.

Horizons Regional Council will also seek to obtain the views of non-users by methods such as random phone or postal surveys.

Policy 38

Horizons Regional Council will monitor the operation of the Total Mobility Scheme through the advisory committees.

Explanation

Total Mobility advisory committees provide feedback to Horizons Regional Council from users of the Scheme, issuers of vouchers, and taxi operators.

Policy 39

All services supported by Horizons Regional Council will be monitored by Horizons Regional Council staff in accordance with the Horizons Regional Council monitoring strategy.

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council staff undertake intermittent monitoring on all the services. There is a need to ensure consistency with safety and service quality standards and to ensure services operate according to registration/contract provisions.

Monitoring passenger numbers on specific days and routes also provides a means of validating that figures supplied by the transport operators are accurate. Informal monitoring of drivers means they can present their views or ideas directly to Horizons Regional Council staff.

Operators providing contracted services are required to supply information on a monthly basis as to passenger numbers. This information, together with voucher and concession ticket (or *GoCard*) usage is used to monitor passenger numbers.

All complaints received by Horizons Regional Council regarding any of its contracted or specified services will be recorded and investigated.

10. Infrastructure

Passenger transport is more than just passengers and vehicles. It includes bus stops, seats, shelters, terminals and physical passenger transport priority measures, as well as park and ride provisions, collectively known as passenger transport infrastructure. These come under the control of the local roading authority, which is usually the district or city council. However Horizons Regional Council can provide funding for the construction of bus seats, shelters and park and ride facilities on public transport routes.

Consultation between the operator, passengers, the city/district council and Horizons Regional Council is required to determine what infrastructure is needed. This is to ensure that the infrastructure provided is appropriate in terms of location and existing public demand.

Specific attention should be given to the needs of those with disabilities regarding infrastructure design and provision. Horizons Regional Council will continue to investigate quality, cost-effective improvements for shelter design and other infrastructure.

10.1 Bus Stops, Seats, Shelters and Bus Stations

City and district councils are responsible for the provision of bus stop signage and road marking. All operators must approach roading authorities regarding bus stops **before** notifying Horizons Regional Council of commercial services. City and district councils are responsible for the provision of bus stop signage.

Horizons Regional Council supports district and city councils in the provision of bus seats and shelters. This support includes financial assistance and advice as to location and type. Horizons Regional Council has an ongoing programme of providing bus stop seats and shelters, subject to available funding. Once installed, city and district councils are responsible for the maintenance of bus stop seats/shelters.

It is desirable that all services have a clearly identifiable starting point. This situation currently exists with Palmerston North and Wanganui bus services using the Main Street Terminal and Maria Place. Horizons Regional Council will fund construction of bus stations, with city/district councils responsible for on-going maintenance. Horizons Regional Council contracted services will utilise central bus stations unless this is not practical or appropriate for the service.

Policy 40

Horizons Regional Council will fund the installation of seats and shelters at bus stops that meet the criteria outlined below, as funding permits. Horizons Regional Council will endeavour to fund at least four shelters per year in the region.

The following criteria will be used in deciding the placement of infrastructure:

- the bus stop must be for a service which meets the criteria set out in Policy 1;
- the bus must pick up and drop off passengers along the specified route at designated stopping places;
- well patronized (or with the potential to be so); and
- the bus stop must be on a route which is regularly serviced.

Explanation

As limited funding is available for infrastructure, the location of bus seats and shelters must be carefully decided. Horizons Regional Council will consult with the local roading authorities and bus operators regarding the construction and placement of infrastructure.

Policy 41

Horizons Regional Council will fund the construction and installation of seats and shelters. Sites will be selected in conjunction with the local city or district council. Once installed, the local council will be responsible for maintaining the seat and shelter.

Explanation

Horizons Regional Council will fund and install the construction of seats and shelters, and, once installed, it is the responsibility of the local council to maintain and clean the shelters.

In addition, Horizons Regional Council will investigate and encourage alternative means of funding of bus shelters within our region. In Palmerston North several bus shelters have been commercially provided by Adshel through a contract with Palmerston North City Council.

Specific attention should be given to the needs of those with disabilities when considering infrastructure design and provision. Horizons Regional Council will work with Palmerston North City Council during their 2008/09 review of the Main Street Terminal and surrounding roading infrastructure in order to address the growing demand for the Terminal and to improve access for those with disabilities.

10.1.1 Passenger Information

Horizons Regional Council will ensure that passenger information for services meeting the criteria in Policy 1 is displayed in bus shelters and stations as appropriate. For further detail on Passenger Information please refer to Chapter 11.

10.2 Park and Ride Developments

Policy 42

Horizons Regional Council will provide funding assistance for the development of park and ride facilities where the services meet the following criteria:

- the location must be:
- a designated pick up/drop off point;
- regularly serviced;
- well patronized (or with the potential to be so)
- the service must meet the criteria set out in Policy 1; and
- the proposed facility is subject to normal benefit/cost assessment.

Explanation

The provision of park and ride facilities, particularly for use by commuters, (where a proven need has been identified) will be aided by Horizons Regional Council in co-ordination with local councils. The local council will meet maintenance costs.

As commuter services are improved, opportunities for Park and Ride developments in Palmerston North and other areas may arise. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Park and Ride facilities for commuter rail passengers in Levin have been identified as an area for investigation.

10.3 Public Transport Priority Measures

As traffic flows in urban areas increase, public transport services are slowed. Priority measures, such as special traffic lights, bus stop improvements, and changes to traffic signal phase times can improve travel time and reliability, making buses more attractive as a means of travel. Horizons Regional Council will work with relevant territorial authorities to investigate appropriate public transport priority measures.

Key corridors in Palmerston North have been identified as an area for investigation.

11. Passenger Information

Horizons Regional Council is responsible for the recording of passenger services operating in the region and for the provision of adequate passenger service information to the public.

Horizons Regional Council will provide passenger transport education to groups upon request and will work with interested parties in order to encourage and sustain passenger transport use.

Specific attention should be given to the needs of those with disabilities when providing passenger information. Horizons Regional Council will continue to investigate quality and cost-effective improvements for information provision.

11.1 Passenger Services Register

All commercial passenger transport services operating in the region must register with Horizons Regional Council (see Section 8). This includes scheduled and non-scheduled services. A register of these services is available for public inspection during office hours at Horizons Regional Council offices in Palmerston North.

11.2 Timetable Information

An important part of the public transport network is the provision of timetable information, including information at bus stops and on the bus. This makes it easier for users, and also helps maintain patronage. This information should be free to passengers, and updated as necessary.

Policy 43

Horizons Regional Council will ensure timetable information is readily available for passengers, at no cost, for services that meet the criteria in Policy 1.

Explanation

Depending on the needs of each service, Horizons Regional Council will provide assistance towards production of timetables and information displays, in terms of advice, funding, and production for services that meet the criteria on Policy 1.

In accordance with Horizons Regional Council objectives in promoting public transport it is necessary that timetables and other information are readily available to the general public. Timetables will be available from bus drivers, public libraries, information centres, main bus terminals, bus stop shelters, Horizons Regional Council offices, on www.horizons.govt.nz, and 24-hour timetable information is available via the Horizons 0508 446 749 call centre.

Horizons Regional Council will ensure that relevant passenger information is displayed in bus stations and bus stop shelters for all subsidised services. Pole-mounted timetable holder displays are being progressively installed in Palmerston North and Wanganui at priority bus stops.

Horizons Regional Council will investigate and trial cost effective improvements to the provision of bus service information (including advancements in passenger information technology such as real-time information) for services meeting the criteria in Policy 1, subject to normal benefit/cost assessments.

12. Publicity and Promotion

It is important that services are publicised and promoted appropriately.

12.1 Publicity and Promotion

Policy 44

Horizons Regional Council will regularly publicise and promote public transport services.

Explanation

Subject to available funding, services which meet the criteria in Policy 1 will be promoted and publicised as appropriate. Publicity may include flyer drops, discounted travel periods, competitions and support for service provision at one-off events. Promotion will ensure that those people who might use the service know about it, with the aim of encouraging new users to try the services.

Horizons Regional Council will also provide publicity, through low cost means, for non-subsidised services operating in the region. This may be by providing information on the Horizons Regional Council website, or through its external publications (such as free newspaper inserts).

Annex A Contents of Regional Land Transport Strategy which relate to Passenger Transport

Specific requirements of the Regional Land Transport Strategy (2006) as they affect passenger transport are:

Policy 6 Support greater use of public passenger transport by all sectors of the community.

To be achieved by:

- 6.1 Refocusing and promoting public passenger transport in urban centres as a mode of choice for current car users, particularly commuters (Horizons Regional Council).
- 6.2 Financially supporting the provision of public passenger transport services where these have a significant economic, environmental, access and mobility, health or safety benefit to the community (Horizons Regional Council).
- 6.3 Investigating and developing innovative and cost-effective public transport solutions to improve access and mobility for residents in small towns and rural areas (Horizons Regional Council).
- 6.4 Planning and providing for passenger transport routes and facilities in residential subdivisions and major new facilities (Territorial Authorities).
- 6.5 Developing high quality, safe and secure passenger transport infrastructure in appropriate locations (Horizons Regional Council, Territorial Authorities).
- 6.6 Providing bus priority measures where appropriate and necessary to maintain a high level of service (Territorial Authorities).
- 6.7 Encouraging the continued provision of well-coordinated school bus transport by the Ministry of Education.

Policy 7 Ensure that people with special transport needs are provided for in the public transport system.

To be achieved by:

- 7.1 Providing Total Mobility services and other specialised transport services in as many parts of the Region as possible.
- 7.2 Providing wheelchair-accessible public transport where viable.
- 7.3 Ensuring that transport infrastructure and information provision accommodates the special needs of its users.

Policy 11 Promote a change in travel behaviour in order to reduce the use of private motor vehicles and promote public health through more active modes of transport.

To be achieved by:

- 11.1 Encouraging a reduction in car use by promoting ways to reduce the need to travel (Territorial Authorities, Horizons Regional Council).
- 11.2 Promoting the use of active transport modes and public transport in order to support transport choice and reduce car dependency (Territorial Authorities, Horizons Regional Council).
- 11.3 Promoting more efficient use of vehicles by increasing vehicle occupancy (Horizons Regional Council, Territorial Authorities).
- 11.4 Integrating land use and transport network planning (Territorial Authorities).
- 11.5 Supporting the development of higher density residential developments close to main urban transport routes/modes (Territorial Authorities).
- 11.6 Promoting the adoption of urban design protocols (Territorial Authorities).
- 11.7 Managing parking supply and pricing as a means of managing travel demand (Territorial Authorities).

Annex B Functions of various organisations involved in Passenger Transport

Land Transport New Zealand

Is responsible, under Section 69 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 for:

- Promotion of land transport sustainability and safety;
- Land transport funding;
- Education and information programmes;
- Licensing;
- Standards enforcement; and
- Regulatory compliance.

Ministry of Transport

- Sets legal and policy framework for all transport activities.

Police

- Enforcement of road safety regulations.

City and District Councils

- Management of local roads within their boundaries;
- Provision of passenger transport infrastructure; and
- Advocacy and liaison role on behalf of the local community.

Transport Operators

- Provision of public passenger transport services;
- Identification and notification of commercial services to the Council; and
- Tendering for the provision of non-commercial services.

Annex C Schedule of specified services

Ruapehu District

- a. Raetihi – Ohakune Service. A fortnightly service between Raetihi and Ohakune. The service is currently provided by Dempsey's Buses under contract to Horizons Regional Council.
- b. Taumarunui Taxi Service. A 12-hour seven-day a week service operates in the Taumarunui area. This service is currently operated by Ruapehu Cabs and includes a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.
- c. Services for People With Disabilities. The Total Mobility Scheme currently operates in Taumarunui area. Ruapehu Cabs provides both general and wheelchair-accessible, subsidised taxi services for Total Mobility clients on demand. The Taumarunui Mobility Van Society provides a pre-booked wheelchair-accessible transport service. The Society receives a subsidy from Horizons Regional Council each year under a concessionary fare payment agreement.

Wanganui District

- a. Wanganui Urban Services. Weekday bus services to Springvale/St John's Hill, Castlecliff, Wanganui East, Gonville and Aramoho. Saturday services also operate on these routes except Springvale/St John. The service is currently provided by Tranzit Coachlines under contract to Horizons Regional Council.
- b. Wanganui Taxi Service. A 24-hour seven-day a week service is available in Wanganui, provided by Wanganui Taxis and River City Cabs. Both companies offer wheelchair-accessible services.
- c. Service for People with Disabilities. The Total Mobility Scheme currently operates in Wanganui area. Taxi Companies provide both general, and wheelchair-accessible, subsidised taxi services for Total Mobility client's 24-hours seven days a week.
- d. Castlecliff Overload School Service. A school-timed overload service to cater for the excess demand on the Castlecliff route from school pupils. The service is currently provided by Ash's Coachlines under contract to Horizons Regional Council.

Rangitikei District

- a. Taihape to Wanganui/Palmerston North Service. A once-a-month service to Wanganui with pick-up points in Ohingaiti, Hunterville, and Marton. Also a service that travels once a month to Palmerston North with the same pick-up points with an additional stop in Bulls. The service returns to Taihape the same day. The service is currently provided by R and T Passenger Services under contract to Horizons Regional Council.
- b. Marton – Palmerston North Commuter Service (Trial) A weekday service from Marton to Palmerston North with pick-up points in Bulls, Sanson and Awahuri.

This service is currently provided by Tranzit Coachlines under trial contract to Horizons Regional Council.

- c. Marlon Taxi Service. A 24-hour seven days a week service operates in Marlon. This is currently provided by Palmerston North Taxis.
- d. Service for People with Disabilities. The Total Mobility Scheme currently operates in Marlon. Palmerston North Taxis provide subsidised taxi services for Total Mobility clients.

Manawatu District

- a. Feilding to Palmerston North. A Monday – Saturday service between Feilding and Palmerston North. This service is currently provided by Madge Coachlines under a concessionary fare agreement.
- b. Feilding Taxi Service. A 24-hour seven days a week service operates in Feilding. The taxi service is currently provided by Feilding Taxis.
- c. Service for People With Disabilities. The Total Mobility Scheme currently operates in Feilding. Feilding Taxis provide subsidised taxi services for Total Mobility clients 24 hours seven days a week. Feilding St John and Mobility Plus both provide a pre-booked, wheelchair-accessible transport service. These services receive a subsidy from Horizons Regional Council each year under a concessionary fare payment agreement.

Palmerston North City

- a. Palmerston North City Services. A daily service with coverage of the major suburbs and Massey University. The service is currently provided by Tranzit Coachlines under a concessionary fare agreement and the fleet includes wheelchair-accessible vehicles.
- b. Ashhurst to Palmerston North. A round trip service three times a week between Ashhurst and Palmerston North, scheduled as a shoppers service to complement commercially operated commuter services operating in the area. The service is currently provided under contract to Horizons Regional Council by Tranzit Coachlines.
- c. Palmerston North Taxi Service. A 24 hours a day seven day a week service operates through five local taxi companies. One of which, Taxis Palmerston North, also offers wheelchair-accessible services in six vans. The other companies are:
 - Anytime Cabs
 - Gold and Black Taxis
 - Kiwicabs
 - Manawatu Taxis

- d. Service for People With Disabilities². The Total Mobility Scheme currently operates in Palmerston North. Taxi Companies provide both general, and wheelchair-accessible, subsidised taxi services for Total Mobility clients 24 hours seven days a week. A pre-booked mobility service is available seven days a week operated by Freedom Mobility and Mobility Plus. These services receive a subsidy from Horizons Regional Council each year under a concessionary fare payment agreement.
- e. Linton to Palmerston North Service. A late night bus service between Linton and Palmerston North. This is currently provided under contract to Horizons Regional Council by Tranzit Coachlines.
- f. PARS Service. This bus is provided by the Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society for travel between Palmerston North and Manawatu Prison at Linton. It receives concession fare subsidy each year.

Tararua District

- a. Tararua Order of St John operate both a local service (within Dannevirke) and one to Palmerston North Hospital via Dannevirke and Woodville. Both services operate under a pre-booking system and are wheelchair-accessible. These services receive support from Horizons Regional Council through a concessionary fare scheme.
- b. Pahiatua – Palmerston North Services. A Monday – Friday service between Pahiatua, Woodville and Dannevirke to Palmerston North. This service is currently provided by Rose Coachlines. No subsidy is provided by Horizons Regional Council on this service.

Horowhenua District

- a. Levin Round Town Services. Services operate four times each week on three routes in Levin. These services are currently provided by Madge Coachlines under contract to Horizons Regional Council.
- b. Levin to Palmerston North. A weekday commuter service between Levin and Palmerston North. This service is provided by Madge Coachlines under contract to Horizons Regional Council.
- c. Levin Taxi Service. A 24 hours a day seven days a week operates services in the Levin area. These services are currently provided by Levin Taxis and Taxis Direct and taxi fleets include wheelchair-accessible vehicles.
- d. Service for People With Disabilities. The Total Mobility Scheme currently operates in Levin. Both companies provide general and wheelchair-accessible, subsidised taxi services for Total Mobility clients 24 hours a day seven days a week. Services are also provided by Levin Community Services Inc., who receive a subsidy from Horizons Regional Council under a concessionary fare payment agreement.

² There are different levels of disability which are catered for under this heading. Services include use of taxi cars, wheelchair-accessible vans and bed-to-bed transport care.

- e. Horowhenua Community Bus. A free community bus between Shannon, Foxton, Waitarere Beach and Levin, operated as appropriate by Horowhenua District Council.
- f. Foxton to Foxton Beach Services. A once a week scheduled service between Foxton Beach and Foxton. This service is currently provided by the Foxton Motor Coach Museum Trust and is subsidised by Horizons Regional Council under a concessionary fare scheme.
- g. Foxton Taxi Service. A 12 hours a day seven days a week service operates in Foxton. This service is currently provided by Foxton Taxis.
- h. Service for People With Disabilities The Total Mobility Scheme currently operates in Foxton. Foxton Taxis provide subsidised taxi services for Total Mobility clients 12 hours a day seven days a week. Services are also provided by Foxton Beach Community Centre, who receive a subsidy from Horizons Regional Council under a concessionary fare payment agreement.

Annex D Horizons Regional Council 2006-07 Passenger Transport Budget

Budgeted Passenger Transport Costs 2006-07

Passenger transport services – what the Council will deliver in 2006-07³

	PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICE PROVISION 2006-07 (excluding Administration Costs)							
	PN City	Wanganui	Horowhenua	Tararua	Ruapehu	Rangitikei	Manawatu	TOTAL
City Services	444,000	352,000	29,000					\$825,000
Massey Unlimited Access Service	786,000							\$786,000
Linton/Massey Night Service	23,000							\$23,000
UCOL Service - P Nth	45,000							\$45,000
Wang UCOL Service - now included with Wanganui City Service								\$0
Levin to P Nth Commuter Service	14,533		14,533				14,533	\$43,599
Wanganui School Bus		28,000						\$28,000
Ashhurst to PN Bus Service	11,000							\$11,000
Talhape to Wanganui and PN	1,125	1,125				2,250		\$4,500
Marton to P Nth Commuter Service	6,333					6,333	6,333	\$19,000
Marton to Wanganui Trial Service		5,000				5,000		\$10,000
Raetihi to Ohakune Bus Service					2,040			\$2,040
Physical Freedom	14,500		5,000					\$14,500
Foxton Services								\$5,000
Tararua Mobility Van	2,200			3,300				\$5,500
Feliding St John Mobility Van	1,700						1,700	\$3,400
Taumarunui Mobility Van					8,700			\$8,700
Levin Community Van			3,500					\$3,500
Horowhenua Community Bus			10,000					\$10,000
Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society Van	1,000							\$1,000
Feliding to P Nth Service - possible subsidy	15,000						15,000	\$30,000
Bus Seats and Shelters	36,000	18,000	3,500				3,500	\$63,000
Total Mobility	275,000	146,000	85,000		16,500	13,000	43,000	\$578,500
Total Transport Costs	1,678,391	550,125	150,533	3,300	27,240	26,583	84,066	\$2,520,239
Land Transport New Zealand funding	811,696	260,463	66,767	1,650	11,970	11,992	37,733	\$1,202,269
Contributions from other organisations	281,000	10,000						318,500
	Massey Service	UCOL Free Service						
	5,000							
	Massey Late Night							
	22,500							
UCOL								
Net Transport Service Costs	558,196	279,663	83,767	1,650	15,270	14,592	46,333	\$999,469

³ This Table shows the cost of passenger transport services only. It does not include Administration costs or the capital cost of the Levin Park and Ride facility.

