

Report No.	21-57
Decision Required	

REPORT ON THE TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME AND THE CONCESSIONARY FARE SCHEME FOR 1 JULY TO 31 MARCH 2021

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To inform members of the performance of Total Mobility and Concessionary Fare Schemes for the first 9 months of Financial Year 2020-21.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 21-57.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. No significant business risk impact as a result of this report.

6. CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

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

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The purpose of the **Total Mobility (TM)** scheme is to assist eligible people with long term impairments to access appropriate transport to meet their daily needs and enhance their community participation. This assistance is provided in the form of subsidised door to door transport services wherever scheme transport providers operate. There are currently 7349 registered clients on the Horizons TM scheme.
- 7.2. TM operates in 5 districts within the Horizons region: Whanganui, Palmerston North, Levin, Marton and Feilding.
- 7.3. The scheme provides a subsidy per trip of 50%, up to a maximum fare. In Whanganui, Palmerston North and Levin the maximum amount per trip is \$10.00 and in Marton and Feilding, the maximum amount is \$5.00 per trip. The subsidised part of the fare is funded in partnership by Horizons through rates and central government (through Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.)
- 7.4. Horizons supports a number of specialised community transport solutions which mainly assist people accessing medical appointments. These health shuttles and community vans have capped funding each year and fall under the umbrella of the Concessionary Fare scheme.

8. TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME

- 8.1. This section of the report provides information on the performance of the Total Mobility scheme for the first 9 months of the Financial Year (FY) 2020-21. To illustrate trends and to provide comparisons, the graphs below also show information from Financial Years 2018-19 and 2019-20. The information comes directly from the **TM electronic administration system (Ridewise)**. Ridewise was implemented in September 2018.
- 8.2. A summary of the high level statistics for the first 9 months of FY 2020-21 are as follows:
 - a. Number of trips taken on the TM Scheme, 114,363;
 - b. Total Number of kilometres travelled, 494,000 kms;
 - c. Number of trips taken using a wheelchair hoist, 16,814;
 - d. Total subsidy paid to transport operators, \$792,922.00.

Usage of TM Scheme

- 8.3. Figure 1 below shows the usage of the TM scheme by month and compared to usage in previous years. For the first 9 month of this FY the trend is showing a steady growth in the use of the scheme, and since November usage per month has been greater than in previous years. A total of 114,000 trips have been taken during the first 9 months of this financial year. It is likely by year end usage will be similar to usage in FY 2019-20, in which a total of 162,000 trips taken.



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

Number of clients actively using TM

- 8.5. From the Ridewise data we are able to identify how many people are actively using TM on a monthly basis. The number of active users remains significantly lower than the number of people registered on the scheme. We can assume this is due to the varied demographics of the clients on the scheme, financial constraints, and clients using the scheme as a back up to public transport and in some cases clients not using the scheme at all. Figure 2 below shows the breakdown per month.
- 8.6. For the period July to March 2020-2021 there were 3934 active users compared to 7358 registered users. This is an increase from the 20219-20 financial year of 1164 active users. The number of registered users increases every year due to our ageing population and increased awareness of the scheme.

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8.7. For the first 9 months of the 2020-2021 financial year, trips have fluctuated in conjunction with COVID-19 level changes. However more stability is noted from January 2021 with an expectation of an increase showing by the end of the year. Client assessments have also fluctuated but have started to increase again from the beginning of 2021, as people become more confident in travelling again. For the last few months we have typically done around 70 assessments a month.



Figure 2: Total number of active users of Total Mobility by month.

Subsidy paid to Transport Operators

8.8. Figure 3 shows the monthly subsidy value paid to transport operators. This amount continues to increase and is consistent with the increase in trips taken.



Figure 3: Monthly subsidy paid to Transport Operators

Usage of wheelchair hoists

8.9. Figure 4 shows the trend across months and years for the number of trips which use a wheelchair hoist. The data shows the fluctuations in hoist travel, as with trips in general, attributed to the fluctuations in the COVID-19 levels. March is showing an increase in hoist travel suggesting these vulnerable users are now feeling more confident to travel, although these numbers are still considerably lower than FY 2018-19 data. The expectation is that this will continue to increase as communities continue to return to normal. Currently, around 10% of all trips taken require a hoist.

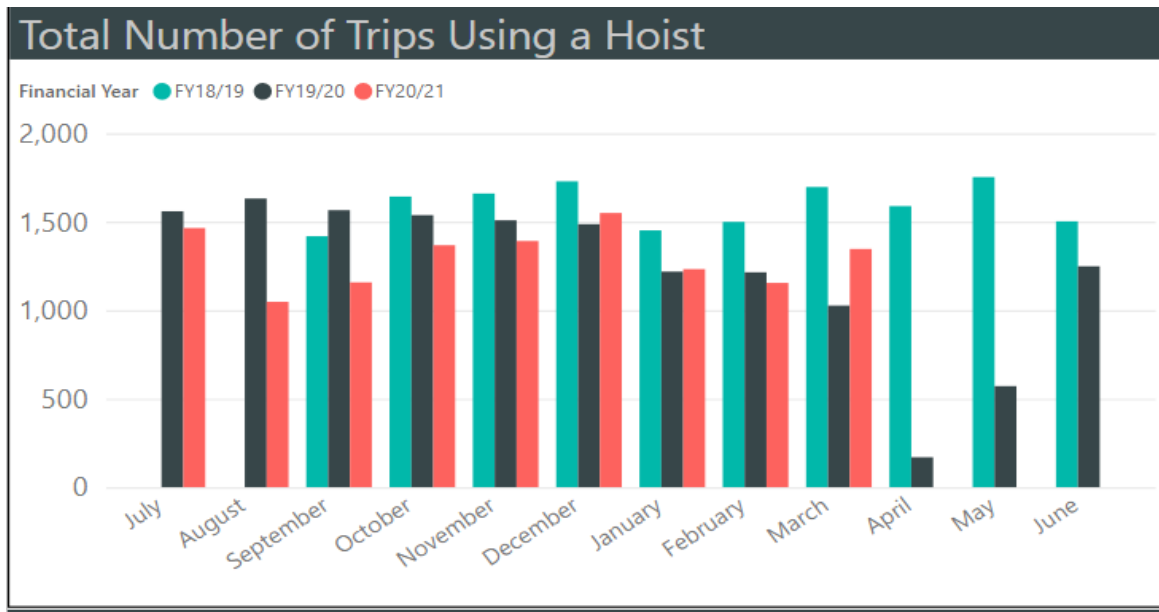


Figure 4: Total number of wheelchair hoist trips taken by month

Number of wheelchair hoist clients actively using TM

8.10. The data provided in Figure 5 shows less hoist clients travelling compared to the same period in previous years, but those clients that are travelling are doing this more often. However there has been a steady increase since the beginning of 2021.

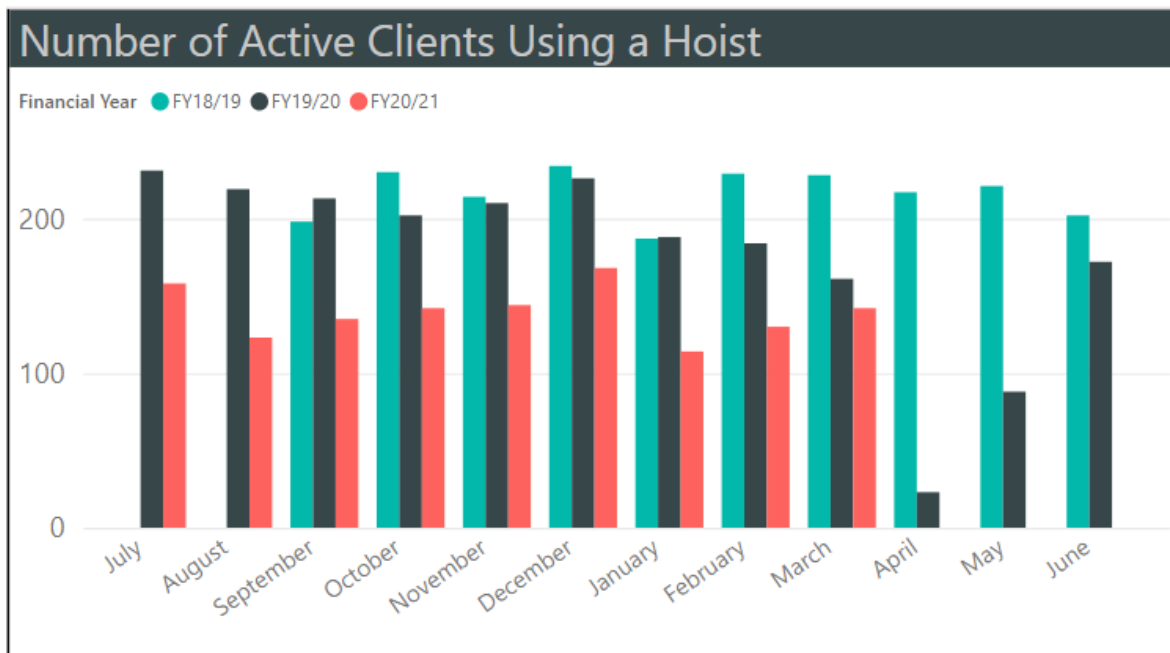


Figure 5: Total number of active wheelchair hoist users of Total Mobility by month

9. FEILDING TOTAL MOBILITY MAXIMUM FARE SUBSIDY CHANGE

9.1. The 2018-19 Total Mobility Fare Review found that 34% of the trips taken in Feilding the fare was more than double the maximum subsidy offered, suggesting the \$5 maximum fare subsidy was set too low. The review recommended the maximum fare subsidy be increased to \$10.00 in Feilding as this would enable 99% of trips to be covered, and would also be consistent with other TM districts including neighbouring Palmerston North.

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- 9.2. PTC approved the recommendation in June 2019 and Council adopted on 25 June 2019, subject to the New Zealand Transport Agency contribution. The subsidy change will be implemented in FY 2021-22 as part of the Long Term Plan 2021-2031. Estimated cost of the change is \$10,000 local share. This figure is based on figures from the 2018/19 financial year.

10. TOTAL MOBILITY CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

- 10.1. Palmerston North TM clients were surveyed in this year's customer satisfaction survey. The questionnaire was mailed out to 2170 registered clients. The closing date of the survey was 30 April 2021. A report on the responses and findings will be available at the 17 August PTC meeting.

11. CONCESSIONARY FARE SCHEME

- 11.1. Tables 1 and 2 show expenditure and patronage numbers for each service covered by the concessionary fare scheme. The annual funding is capped to approved budget for the various services.
- 11.2. Foxton Community Van reached their funding cap at the end of January 2021. St John Feilding have used 70% of their capped funding and St John Marton have used 86% of their capped funding. The Taumarunui Community Van has used 80% of their capped funding. Overall funding for the scheme is showing a 43% underspend at this stage.
- 11.3. St John Transport Manager (Central Region) has advised us that they are still reviewing their processes regarding funding requirements across all the St John's health shuttles and how it should be allocated. Once this initial work has been completed Horizons officers will meet with St John to discuss.
- 11.4. Horowhenua Health Shuttle receives funding from the District Health Board and through donations as well as the funding provided by Horizons Regional Council.
- 11.5. Taumarunui Community Van receive funding from donations and Horizons Regional Council.
- 11.6. For the next financial year Concessionary Fare Scheme funding allocations will be adjusted based on passengers numbers and expenditure over the last 2 financial years. The overall allocation will remain within the budget approved through the long term plan process.
- 11.7. As the funding allocation methodology and contracts have not been reviewed for a number of years officers plan undertake a review and if changes are suggested that these be implemented in FY 2022-23 financial year.

Service	Year to date 2020-21			Full Year 2020-21		
	Actuals \$	Budget \$	Variance \$	Forecast \$	Budget \$	Variance \$
Taumarunui Mobility Van	12,565	10,500	(2,065)	16,763	14,000	(2,763)
Horowhenua Health Shuttle	12,597	18,750	6,153	16,796	25,000	8,204
St John - Feilding to PN	3,168	3,000	(168)	4,753	4,500	(253)
St John - Dannevirke to PN	4,903	9,191	4,288	6,537	12,254	5,717
St John - Pahiatua to PN	6,180	9,349	3,169	8,240	12,465	4,225
St John - Marton	3,608	3,150	(458)	4,811	4,200	(611)
St John - Whanganui	0	413	413	620	620	0
St John - Waimarino	1,341	1,750	409	2,299	2,625	326
Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Society	118	900	782	474	1,200	726
Foxton Community Services Van	1,200	600	(600)	2,057	1,200	(857)
Total	44,291	56,436	12,145	63,349	78,064	14,715

Table 1: Actual spend v Budget July 2020-March 2021 and full year forecast.

Service	PATRONAGE			
	2018/19	2019/20	9 months to March 2021	YTD compared to 2019/20
Taumarunui	4,000	3,377	3,590	94%
Horowhenua Health Shuttle	7,082	5,903	4,199	71%
St John Feilding	3,379	3,419	2,234	65%
St John Dannevirke	2,497	1,869	1,258	67%
St John Pahiatua	3,098	2,852	1,545	54%
St John Marton	1,473	1,435	1,204	83%
St John Whanganui	264	223	<i>Not available at this time. Figures are provided annually</i>	
St John Waimarino	130	130	82	63%
PARS	124	64	64	0
Foxton Community Van	1,175	610	530	86%
Total	23,222	19,882	14,309	71%

Table 2: Patronage year to date (YTD) compared to full year

- 11.8. Overall passenger numbers remain consistent with 2019-20 financial year but still less than the 2018-19 financial, due to impacts of COVID-19.

12. SIGNIFICANCE

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

Desley Monks
TOTAL MOBILITY CO-ORDINATOR

Rhona Hewitt
TRANSPORT MANAGER

ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.