

Mayor and Councillors

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2011

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

SUBMISSION ON THE GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL'S REVIEW OF ŌTAKI PUBLIC TRANSPORT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report seeks the approval of the Economic and Community Development Committee for the submission on the Ōtaki Public Transport review (see Appendix One) to be sent to Greater Wellington Regional Council.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

- 2 The Council's significance policy is not triggered by this report.

BACKGROUND

- 3 The Council has been in ongoing discussion and correspondence with Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) regarding public transport issues in Ōtaki for a number of years. Ōtaki is not well served by public transport and in February 2011 lost its direct bus service to Paraparaumu as a consequence of the rail extension to Waikanae. Reasons given for cutting this service were cost savings and not wanting to run parallel services. Concern about this was communicated to GWRC in a letter from Mayor Jenny Rowan 26 October 2010. The only concession as a result of this letter was an agreement by GWRC to bring forward a review of public transport services in Ōtaki.
- 4 For the purposes of the review GWRC brought together a Reference Group consisting of Ōtaki Community Board members, the bus operator and a community member and public transport user. In April 2011 GWRC conducted an initial community survey which attracted 114 submissions.
- 5 The Reference Group has met once during the review. At that meeting they were presented with the results of the survey and given an outline of the final two options that would be distributed for consultation (see Appendix Two consultation brochure). Submissions close on 11 December 2011.

CONSIDERATIONS

Issues

- 6 The Council has raised its concerns in relation to public transport in Ōtaki on many occasions. The limited options offered as a result of the ‘review’ continue to reflect a lack of appreciation of the infrastructure needs of Ōtaki now and in the future. The proposals are made in the context of tight funding constraints and are only a limited rearrangement of already limited existing services.
- 7 The recently adopted Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) offers no potential of improvements in the foreseeable future. The Council’s submissions to the initial and draft RPTP requested that Ōtaki be upgraded, in the classification of the network, to a Rapid Transport Network. This has not occurred and Ōtaki remains classified as “other”.



- 8 One possible option for GWRC to help fund improvements to the Ōtaki transport service is to reallocate the money from the 271 Lindale bus service which has been cancelled as a result of Whitireia Community Polytechnic relocating. According to the General Manager of Public Transport's Report 11.566 to Economic Wellbeing Committee of 8 November 2011, the Route 271 service cost "circa \$43k p.a." It is suggested that this saving be used to assist with extra services for Ōtaki.

Financial Considerations

- 9 There are no financial considerations.

Legal Considerations

- 10 There are no legal considerations.

Delegation

- 11 The Environment and Community Development Committee has delegated authority:

"to review and approve any submission on any issue that is being made on behalf of Council."

Consultation

- 12 The Ōtaki Community Board has also written a submission to Greater Wellington Regional Council (see Appendix Three).

Policy Implications

- 13 There are no policy implications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14 That the Economic and Community Development Committee notes that Greater Wellington Regional Council's review of Ōtaki Public Transport does not address the need for a strategic approach to the transport issues that Ōtaki faces.
- 15 That the Economic and Community Development Committee approves the draft submission on the Ōtaki Public Transport Review (see Appendix One of report SP-11-432) to be sent to Greater Wellington Regional Council, subject to any changes made by the Committee.

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ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix One: Draft Submission to Greater Wellington Regional Council on the Ōtaki Public Transport Review

Appendix Two: Ōtaki Public Transport Review consultation document
<http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Transport/Public-transport/Docs/Otaki-brochure.PDF>

Appendix Three: Ōtaki Community Board submission

Appendix 3

Ōtaki Public Transport Review submission from the Ōtaki Community Board 29 November 2011

The last review of the Ōtaki bus service took place in 2005. The resulting changes were:

- Wednesday and Friday only shopper trips to Paraparaumu which, after a pilot service, were extended to all week days;
- the introduction of services at school start and end times;
- the Saturday service increased from two to four return trips; and
- a wheelchair accessible bus was introduced.

This was a modest improvement but a long way off a satisfactory service.

In February 2011, the extension of regular commuter train services to Waikanae Railway Station resulted in the cutting of direct bus services from Ōtaki to Paraparaumu. The rationale was given that Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) would not run parallel public transport services and that the savings made would be used to fund the rail improvements. In response to the subsequent distress caused by the loss of the direct bus service, expressed in a letter from Mayor Jenny Rowan 26 October 2010, GWRC agreed to bringing forward a review of Ōtaki Public Transport services.

In March 2011, a Reference Group was formed by GWRC and a Terms of Reference put together. At the only meeting of the Reference Group GWRC staff presented the two options arrived at after receiving 114 submissions from the community.

It was firmly emphasised by GWRC staff that there was no extra budget and that in response to a question in the GWRC survey 'would passengers pay more in rates for improved services?' the community response was no.

The two options presented offer a few extra bus services by dropping some poorly used services, and *either* extra Saturday services *or* a service on Sundays.

General Comments

The limited nature of this 'review' is disappointing in its lack of improvements for Ōtaki passengers. They will have a lower level of service than before the rail extension to Waikanae and the review offers little or no recompense, just a minor rearrangement within existing services.

The Ōtaki Community Board continues to call for GWRC to start with a long term strategic vision for the community and *then* work back from that to resolve what is possible at any given time. GWRC continues to give low

priority to development of this vision because of resource shortages. This gives no certainty to the community that the bigger picture will be addressed.

The main justification by GWRC for the lack of a proper service in Ōtaki is that there is insufficient patronage. The metropolitan model of public transport does not work in an area like this. There has been no attempt to find creative solutions; the options offered are just a very limited rearrangement of existing services with nothing added.

The Council and the Ōtaki Community Board have sent numerous submissions to GWRC regarding public transport in Ōtaki. Having finally secured this 'review' the Community Board is at a loss to find a way to positively influence the decisions made in Wellington for our community.

GWRC is well aware of the socio-economic make up of the Ōtaki community and the fact that Ōtaki residents have the lowest access to private motor vehicles in the District. Many residents, young and old, rely on public transport to get around and this review does little to make up for the loss of direct bus services to Paraparaumu. GWRC is also aware of the future potential growth in Ōtaki – both residential and economic development. This needs to be supported by appropriate infrastructure including public transport.

Specific comments on options

Weekday options

The 3.00pm bus from Ōtaki goes to Paraparaumu to deliver school children to the station. The Community Board suggests that it would be economic to take passengers, who will be paying their way, on to Coastlands. In addition, the bus could take paying passengers back to Ōtaki for example at 4.20pm.

Essentially, the service GWRC is offering is a bare minimum. Adopting these suggestions, for very little extra outlay, would improve the service for the passenger and be more economical.

Weekend options

Both weekend options are extremely disappointing under the proposal. The Community Board suggests that GWRC have not considered the customer and what they might want to do in Wellington with these options. For three hours travel the timetable offers just over four hours in Wellington.

Passengers cannot get to Wellington until 10.30am under the proposal and must return on the 3.14pm train.

The Community Board suggests that the first service to Waikanae be re-timed so that it would connect with the 9.00am train to Wellington. It is paramount that the current final service is left in place to enable the 4.14pm train from Wellington to be utilised. If that was done it would give a more worthwhile day out in Wellington.

Perhaps GWRC could also consider operating a summer and a winter timetable with a later return service in the summer.

Bus service needed to access the Clean Technology Centre

On a recent visit Regional Councillors saw the opportunities being developed at the Clean Technology Centre in Ōtaki. There are people in Wellington who would come and work at the Centre if they could get there by public transport. This has been mentioned to staff but has not been included in the review. WelTec is also planning courses for students there and public transport access will be necessary for students. The first carpentry course has already started, commencing on 21 November 2011 and running for 34 weeks.

Conclusion

If this timetable is the best this review has to offer at this time, the Ōtaki Community Board requests that work is undertaken by Greater Wellington Regional Council, in the next year, on the development of a strategic approach to the public transport issues that Ōtaki faces.

The Ōtaki Community Board requests that when new contracts are drawn up with operators that the Reference Group are involved in advising on a wider range of options that will develop an improved public transport service that really works for the needs of the Ōtaki community now and in the future.