

AT/04/03/03/01

Chairperson and Committee Members

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2011

Meeting Status : Public

Purpose of Report: For Decision

**IMPACT OF CHANGES TO PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES
FOR KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 The purpose of this report is to outline the bus and other passenger transport service changes happening in the Kāpiti Coast District, their impact on the local community and what the Kāpiti Coast District Council can do to influence the outcomes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

- 2 This report does not trigger the Significance Policy.

BACKGROUND

- 3 There have been concerns about public transport and access to services on the Kāpiti Coast communities for a number of years, particularly in Ōtaki.
- 4 This report examines the current and future bus, train and community transport service changes that affect the Kāpiti Coast District and the significant impact these changes will have on our communities in particular Ōtaki. It highlights:
 - Broad funding and equity concerns for the District compared with other areas in the region.
 - Concerns about the impact of bus service changes as a result of the rail electrification to Waikanae. The Council has objected to these changes but has to date not been successful in stopping them.
 - Issues about the future operation of Capital Connection.

Strategic context

- 5 Greater Wellington Regional Council administers the funding for public transport throughout the region, both bus and rail services. The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010-40 (RLTS) is the guiding document, and implementation is through the Regional Rail Plan (RRP) and the Regional Passenger Transport Plan (RPTP).
- 6 The RLTS and the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy support improved public transport and reduced reliance on cars.

RLTS – Objective 3 - Improve access, mobility and reliability

Improve the accessibility of facilities and activities that enable the whole regional community (including the transport disadvantaged) to participate fully in society and the economy.

Reduce long term reliance on car-based mobility to ensure access for all is improved in an affordable way.

RLTS Objective 4 - Protect and promote public health

Provide a transport network that positively benefits health by improving convenience and ease for social participation and interaction for all.

Sustainable Transport Strategy vision is to:

Create a physical transport system that is attractive, affordable, connected, responsive, safe and offers effective mode choice so that it enables people to act in a sustainable way.

Current services and proposed changes

- 7 The extension of the electrified rail network to Waikanae has prompted Greater Wellington Regional Council to revise a number of bus services in Waikanae and Ōtaki. These developments will have an impact on the District's public transport services including the Capital Connection rail service.

Bus services in Waikanae and Ōtaki

- 8 Currently both Ōtaki and Waikanae have bus services to Paraparaumu.
- 9 The Ōtaki service takes a circuitous route all around Ōtaki from the beach up to Waitohu and then to Paraparaumu via Te Horo, Peka Peka and Waikanae. The full trip takes nearly an hour. There are 5 trips per week day, 4 trips on Saturday and no Sunday service. There is no public bus service north from Ōtaki.
- 10 The Waikanae to Paraparaumu bus service has conveniently located bus stops for Waikanae Town Centre and Waikanae Station.

Bus service changes

- 11 As a result of the upgrade of rail to Waikanae, Greater Wellington Regional Council has made the decision to terminate Ōtaki and Waikanae to Paraparaumu bus services at Waikanae Railway Station from 20 February 2011. This will require passengers to complete their journey from Ōtaki/Waikanae to Paraparaumu by train. There will be an Ōtaki bus service to meet with the Capital Connection at Ōtaki Railway Station.
- 12 There will be no change to the cost to passengers, but the Kāpiti Plus scheme, which is being extended to Waikanae, will not include Ōtaki. This integrated ticketing scheme allows rail commuters with a monthly pass to Wellington, free travel on the buses to the railway station.
- 13 The bus service changes undertaken by Greater Wellington Regional Council have been a revision of services, not part of a comprehensive review.
- 14 The revision of bus services involved a very limited consultation period in October 2010 during local body elections when there were no Council meetings to appeal through. On 26 October 2010 the Mayor sent a submission letter to

Greater Wellington Regional Council emphasising these concerns and opposition to the proposed changes (see Attachment 1).

- 15 The decision to go ahead with the bus service changes was made in early November. On Tuesday 7 December 2010 Mayor Jenny Rowan met with Chair of the Regional Transport Committee Fran Wilde, Peter Glensor Chair of the then Transport and Access Committee, and Brian Baxter the Transport Manager, to object to the changes. Funding constraints and not wanting parallel bus and train services were given as the reasons to cut the bus services.
- 16 Repeated community and Council objections to the service changes have gone unheeded.

Rail Services

- 17 The electrification and double tracking rail improvements to Waikanae are scheduled to be opened on 19 February 2011.
- 18 Ōtaki only has one train service to Wellington and back Monday to Friday, the Capital Connection, which comes through from Palmerston North. Although classified as a long distance rail service, it is used predominantly by commuters. It does not receive NZTA funding and operates as a commercial service.
- 19 The extension of electrification to Waikanae has prompted Horizons Regional Council to establish a subcommittee to consider the impacts on the Capital Connection. The sub committee includes representatives from Kāpiti Coast District Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Palmerston North City Council, and Horowhenua District Council. The subcommittee will work with KiwiRail to monitor changes in patronage for six months following the opening of the new rail service to Waikanae. KiwiRail is also implementing a marketing strategy designed to retain and grow patronage on this inter-regional commuter service.

Community Transport Services

- 20 Access to health services is an ongoing issue for the whole of the Kāpiti Coast District with regional hospitals situated in Wellington and Palmerston North and other services located in Porirua and Lower Hutt. As Ōtaki is at the very southern boundary of Mid Central Health District, residents have to travel to Palmerston North to outpatient appointments and others to travel south to Kenepuru or Wellington. These are long, difficult trips by present public transport.
- 21 Recently community transport has been organised, with St Johns providing a shuttle service north from Ōtaki and Red Cross providing a shuttle service south from Paraparaumu. These services are run by volunteers and don't receive any funding from their respective District Health Boards (DHBs). A similar community health service run from the Wairarapa by the Red Cross is subsidised by Greater Wellington Regional Council and the local DHB.
- 22 The services are operating successfully however, as their funding and operation is reliant on community organisations and volunteers, their future is uncertain.

CONSIDERATIONS

- 23 Kāpiti Coast District Council welcomes the upgrade of the rail network to Waikanae, but has serious concerns about the consequent termination of the bus services to Paraparaumu from Ōtaki and Waikanae Beach and the potential impacts on the local communities, and on the future operation of the Capital Connection.
- 24 The bus service changes are likely to benefit commuters travelling to Wellington at the expense of travellers within the District. The changes will disadvantage the elderly, young people and families with young children living in Waikanae and Ōtaki and wanting to use services or who work in Paraparaumu. There has been considerable feedback from the community on the difficulties people are going to encounter. It is likely that people will use their cars to travel rather than struggle with transfers from rail to bus.
- 25 The bus service changes have highlighted a range of issues from broad considerations about equity in service provision for the District and in particular for Ōtaki, through to specific impacts for the Waikanae and Ōtaki communities. These are discussed separately below.

Equity in regional public transport provision

Levels of service

- 26 The provision of public transport across the region appears to be inconsistent. Compared with the Wairarapa, the Kāpiti Coast District currently pays a higher urban residential transport rate than Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa (over 20% more for the latter). While the targeted transport rate is tax on the rateable capital value of land, it is useful to compare what each territorial authority contributes in revenue with population and transport service provision.
- 27 The Ōtaki ward contribution for 2010/11 is \$259,784 or \$30.52 per head of population (based on 2006 census figures). The South Wairarapa District contribution for 2010/11 is similar at \$246,429 or \$27.72 per head of population. This compares with \$9.75 for Masterton District and \$17.67 for Carterton District.
- 28 Featherston in South Wairarapa District is a similar travel time to Wellington as Ōtaki and appears to be contributing similar revenue to Greater Wellington but has a very different level of service for public transport.
- 29 Featherston has at least five rail services each way per weekday to Wellington and Masterton, and seven bus services a day between Featherston and Masterton. This compares with the one rail service each way between Ōtaki and Wellington and five bus services from Ōtaki to Waikanae. Although the travel patterns in the Wairarapa are slightly different, compared to Kāpiti, it is clear that the level of public transport service provided to Ōtaki is inferior to that in Featherston and other towns in the Wairarapa.
- 30 One of the reasons Greater Wellington has given for the changes to the bus services for Ōtaki and Waikanae as a result of the electrification to Waikanae is to maintain a policy of not providing parallel bus services in competition with rail

services. This does not seem to have been applied in the Wairarapa or to the Hutt Valley Flyer bus service.

Targeted transport rate

- 31 The costs of public transport services, including capital works, are allocated across the region through the Greater Wellington targeted transport rate. The Kāpiti Coast including Ōtaki will bear some of the capital costs from investments in the public transport infrastructure. It is unclear whether the capital investment in the Northern Main Trunk Line will be allocated across the region or only to the Kāpiti Coast. If the latter it will mean that Ōtaki will be paying increased rates for a reduced level of service.

Future of the Capital Connection

- 32 The Capital Connection provides the only passenger rail service link for Ōtaki residents. The service is classified as a long distance service but in reality it operates as a regional commuter services within the travel to work catchment areas of Wellington City. It is quite different in character to other long distance services such as the Overlander (Auckland to Wellington service) which uses the same rail line and caters mainly for tourist and leisure travel.
- 33 The Capital Connection operates as a commercial service and is the only commuter rail service in New Zealand that is not supported out of public funds. The closest parallel to the Capital Connection is the Wairarapa to Wellington rail service which receives full NZTA funding.
- 34 As a consequence of the commercial nature of the Capital Connection service, any ability to accommodate growth in demand is limited due to lack of travel time alternatives through the day.
- 35 The extension of electrification to Waikanae brings both opportunities and risks for the continued operation of commuter rail services to Ōtaki and other areas north of Waikanae.
- 36 There is the opportunity to grow the rail market to north of Waikanae but also the risk that any loss in patronage (mainly through Waikanae) could threaten the economic viability of the Capital Connection. If this service stopped it would leave Ōtaki entirely without a rail service.
- 37 The key stakeholders have started to work together on the operation of the service. It is recommended that the Council advocate for better inter-regional planning for rail services through this forum. It is important to emphasise that the Capital Connection and the new urban rail service to Waikanae can work as complimentary services, not simply in competition.
- 38 The Wellington Regional Rail Plan is due to be reviewed in 2011 and could provide the vehicle for a reassessment of the role of the Capital Connection in the context of commuter rail transport in the Wellington region.

Impacts for the Ōtaki community

- 39 The changes to passenger transport services in Ōtaki will advantage commuters over non-commuters. The bus service changes are designed to make it more convenient for commuters to connect with the Capital Connection at Ōtaki and the regional rail network at Waikanae. People needing transport for reasons other than commuting to Wellington will face longer and more inconvenient journeys from Ōtaki to Paraparaumu, though the cost of this journey will not change.
- 40 This will have two major impacts on the Ōtaki community that are in direct contradiction to the aims of the Regional Land Transport Strategy, the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Great Ōtaki Community Vision.
- It will make access to services more difficult for those who are already 'transport disadvantaged' including older people, young people, people with disabilities and families with young children.
 - It has the potential to increase car usage.
- 41 The population characteristics of Ōtaki and the difficulties of accessing a range of services indicate that a significant proportion of the town are transport disadvantaged. Attachment 2 provides a description of the population and access to services.
- 42 The termination of the current bus service from Ōtaki to Paraparaumu at Waikanae Station will further disadvantage those already having difficulty accessing services. The journey will become longer and more inconvenient.
- 43 Many elderly Ōtaki residents currently catch the bus to Paraparaumu to do their shopping. Catching the train and then the bus back means negotiating the extra long subway at Paraparaumu to the railway station, most likely with shopping bags, (the bus currently goes into Coastlands) and then changing from train to bus again at Waikanae to return to Ōtaki.
- 44 In addition it appears that the revised timetable of the service disadvantages SuperGold Card holders. For example the weekday morning service from Ōtaki to Waikanae Station and the afternoon service from Waikanae Station to Ōtaki are outside Gold Card usage times.
- 45 Changes to the bus services and the increased level of inconvenience may influence travel behaviour and cause people to choose (if they have a choice) cars over public transport.

Impacts for the Waikanae community

- 46 The changes to passenger transport services will provide Waikanae with both advantages and disadvantages. The improvements to rail services will be further enhanced by the extension of the Kāpiti Plus scheme, which operates in Paraparaumu/Raumati, to Waikanae. A new day return ticket for Waikanae-Paraparaumu will be introduced to ensure those on the combined bus/train pay no more than currently.
- 47 However access to Waikanae Town Centre will become more problematic for those travelling by bus and for more localised access. Termination of the Ōtaki and Waikanae services at the station will require rerouting buses down Te Moana

Rd and Marae Lane. A proposed bus stop at the Waikanae Medical Centre was considered, but met with opposition from the centre. The changes require the removal of the bus stop outside the Countdown supermarket on Ngaio Road. Those travelling by bus will have to use the bus stops at the station or in Parata Road to access the Town Centre. The map at Attachment 3 shows the changes in the bus routes and bus stops.

- 48 There will be 32 buses a day going along Marae Lane. This will increase the risk of pedestrian and vehicular accidents, given the number and range of access points (car park entrances and pedestrian crossing) on the Lane.
- 49 If the current services are not reinstated, the Council will need to work with Greater Wellington and the Waikanae community on safer and more convenient bus stops for people wanting to get to the Town Centre.

Financial Considerations

- 50 There are no financial considerations.

Legal Considerations

- 51 There are no legal considerations.

Delegation

- 52 The Environment and Community Development Committee has delegated authority to consider this matter under the following delegation:

Policy Development

7.1 to undertake (within any wider Transport Strategy) all matters not specifically delegated to Council, Council officers or other committees concerning or involving transport and roading policy issued.

Consultation

- 53 Consultation on changes to public transport services is the responsibility of Greater Wellington. The Kāpiti Coast District Council has not undertaken consultation on these issues but has and continues to receive feedback from concerned residents on the changes to the bus services.

Policy Implications

- 54 This report does not have direct policy implications.

Publicity Considerations

- 55 There is already considerable public interest in the bus service changes.

CONCLUSION

- 56 The range and number of current and future changes in passenger transport services have significant implications for the Kāpiti Coast communities both now and well into the future. This is particularly so for those living in Waikanae and Ōtaki.

- 57 These changes will bring benefits to communities in the District, particularly those who commute to Wellington. However the changes are likely to have a negative impact on local public transport users, especially the transport disadvantaged and especially those living in Ōtaki.
- 58 A series of recommendations has been provided to address the impact of these changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 59 That the Committee notes the significant impacts that current public transport service changes will have on the communities in the District, particularly Waikanae and Ōtaki.
- 60 That the Committee rejects as unacceptable the termination of the Waikanae and Ōtaki bus services at Waikanae Station and formally requests that Greater Wellington Regional Council not proceed with the service changes.
- 61 That the Committee supports:
- a) the review of bus services for Ōtaki; and
 - b) the review of the Regional Rail Plan;
- being undertaken by Greater Wellington Regional Council and requires the review to consider innovative public transport provision for Ōtaki and solutions that address rail access for Ōtaki.
- 62 That the Committee insists that Greater Wellington Regional Council recognises the regional commuter nature of the Capital Connection and that it can operate as a complementary service to the Wellington urban rail network, and works constructively with Horizons Regional Council on the future operation of the service.
- 63 That the Committee seeks clarification from Greater Wellington Regional Council on how capital investment in public transport infrastructure and services, including the electrification of the rail service to Waikanae and the changes the bus services as a result, is apportioned through the targeted transport rate across the region.

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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Kāpiti Coast District Council's submission on bus service changes

Attachment 2: Population and service profile of Ōtaki

Attachment 3: Waikanae bus service changes February 2011

ATTACHMENT 1: SUBMISSION ON BUS SERVICE CHANGES

26 October 2010

Brian Baxter
Manager Design and Development
Metlink Public Transport
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Wellington 6142

Dear Brian

Ōtaki and Waikanae Bus Service Changes

Kāpiti Coast District Council welcomes the extension of urban passenger rail services to Waikanae early next year and appreciates that the bus service has to adapt to some degree to the changes. Most of the changes proposed by Greater Wellington Regional Council are supported by Kāpiti Coast District Council. However, the Council has significant concerns about the proposal to terminate the Ōtaki and Waikanae to Paraparaumu bus services at the Waikanae Railway Station. Terminating buses at Waikanae and requiring passengers to transfer to the train for the rest of the trip to Paraparaumu, is not supported.

There are three key public transport issues in the Kāpiti Coast District:

- the need to decrease commuter traffic to Wellington – the rail upgrade to Waikanae will have some impact on this;
- improving access to services, centres and employment within the Kāpiti Coast; and
- providing for the transport disadvantaged – particularly in Ōtaki which has minimal services.

These bus service changes are entirely focused on reducing vehicle commuting to Wellington. Many people who wish to travel to services, shops or work within the District will be further disadvantaged by this proposal. Ōtaki which has high deprivation index levels will be yet further disadvantaged. The sum total of the proposal works against Greater Wellington Regional Council's own targets.

When the bus service changes were originally mooted by Greater Wellington Regional Council, it was understood that the whole Ōtaki bus service would be properly reviewed, as occurred in Raumati, Paraparaumu and partially in Waikanae last year. However, with pressure on Greater Wellington Regional Council to have changes made in time for the rail upgrade, the review became a revision, and as such, is not providing an opportunity for full consultation and has not addressed the main issues facing Ōtaki public transport users.

In the short time available (two weeks) to reply to the proposals a number of key organisations have talked with Kāpiti Coast District Council staff, these are:
the Ōtaki CAB;
the Kāpiti Disability Reference Group;
the Council Welfare Visitor;
the Council of Elders; and
Ōtaki public transport advocate Janet McDonald.

Feedback is that for many people having to make the mode transfer from rail to bus with shopping, pushchairs and wheelchairs etc. will discourage them using public transport to Paraparaumu and may increase the use of private vehicle trips. This is obviously of particular concern for Ōtaki where there is a high incidence of transport disadvantage.

The extra bus service to connect with the Capital Connection in Ōtaki is supported, although concern has been expressed that there are risks should the connection be missed, as this is the only direct rail service to Wellington. There is also not a corresponding service proposed to meet the Capital Connection in the evening at 6.35pm.

Kāpiti Coast District Council commends Greater Wellington Regional Council for extending the Kāpiti Plus integrated ticket scheme, which has been effective in the Paraparaumu area, to include Waikanae. The extension of this scheme will encourage bus use leading to potentially alleviating traffic and parking problems at Waikanae Station.

There are a number of pressing issues around public transport in Ōtaki which have repeatedly been raised by the Kāpiti Coast District Council. It is disappointing that these issues continue to be overlooked. Kāpiti Coast District Council requests that an alternative method of funding the required new services be found and that the bus service between Ōtaki and Paraparaumu is retained. Further, it requests a formal review of the Ōtaki bus service be commenced, with full consultation, within the next three months.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Rowan QSO, JP
Mayor of Kapiti District

ATTACHMENT 2: POPULATION AND SERVICE PROFILE OF ŌTAKI

The Ōtaki community has identified transport as a significant issue. Their vision for public transport has been expressed through the Greater Ōtaki vision:

- *As a priority, a passenger rail service providing regular access to the south;*
- *Mobility services for the elderly and disabled providing access to health and social services to the north and south;*
- *A bus service linking rail services which caters in the long term for both workers and other users;*
- *Improved access for all the community.*

The community vision enables young people to be connected with social activities on the coast and regionally through a public transport system. It is a community that has access to transport for health and other social services delivered outside Ōtaki and options for transport within and around Greater Ōtaki.

Profile of the Ōtaki community

Population

- In 2006 the population of Ōtaki was 5,446 or 12% of the total population of the District.
- 22% of people in Ōtaki are aged 65 and over compared with 11.5% for the Wellington Region.
- Ōtaki had the lowest median incomes in the Kāpiti Coast District for individuals and households. These were also significantly lower than the region – for individuals \$18,600 compared with \$28,000; for households \$29,900 compared with \$59,700.
- 34% of Ōtaki people identify as Maori - the highest proportion in the Kāpiti Coast District, compared with 13% in the region, and twice the national average.
- Ōtaki has a significant proportion of children under 5 years of age.
- 10% of Ōtaki households have no private motor vehicle. This is the highest in the district and is similar to the regional rate. It is higher than areas at similar distances to regional services - Masterton 10%, Carterton 6%, South Wairarapa 6%.
- The population of Ōtaki is expected to grow and development may increase as a result of the expressway.
- Developments in Ōtaki such as local food economy opportunities, clean technology centre and off grid vision will bring passenger transport demands.

- A significant proportion of the Ōtaki population live in areas that have a high deprivation index (8 to 10)¹ – Table 1.

Table 1: Number and proportion of residents by area/deprivation score, Kāpiti Coast District and Ōtaki, 2006

	Kāpiti Coast District		Ōtaki	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Not stated	870	1.9%	0	0.0%
1 – least deprived	3528	7.6%	0	0.0%
2	3978	8.6%	0	0.0%
3	5349	11.6%	54	1.0%
4	6486	14.0%	0	0.0%
5	4923	10.7%	108	2.0%
6	6522	14.1%	777	14.2%
7	5505	11.9%	543	9.9%
8	5202	11.3%	2217	40.6%
9	3087	6.7%	1380	25.3%
10 – most deprived	750	1.6%	384	7.0%
	46200	100.00%	5463	100.0%

Current situation in Ōtaki

Ōtaki is situated on the very northern edge of the Greater Wellington Regional Council area and as such appears to receive low priority for public transport services. For public transport to the north of Ōtaki residents are reliant on Horizon's Regional Council and are situated to the very south of their region.

The demographics of Kāpiti Coast residents mean that there are specific public transport needs, especially access to health services, a large number of retired people using Supergold Cards to travel and a large population of residents who commute to Wellington and to a lesser extent Palmerston North, Porirua and the Hutt Valley.

¹ The Deprivation Index NZDep2006 was produced by Salmond C, Crampton P, Atkinson J for the Department of Public Health, University of Otago Wellington. NZDep2006 combines the following data from the 2006 Census:

- Income: People aged 18-64 receiving a means tested benefit; people living in households with income below an income threshold
- Owned home: People not living in own home
- Support: People aged <65 living in a single parent family
- Employment: People aged 18-64 unemployed
- Qualifications: People aged 18-64 without any qualifications
- Living space: People living in households below a bedroom occupancy threshold
- Communication: People with no access to a telephone
- Transport: People with no access to a car

There is a limited range of services available in Ōtaki. There is one tertiary educational institute Te Wananga o Raukawa, one secondary school Ōtaki College and three primary schools plus the Ōtaki Health Camp. There is a medical centre and pharmacies but no hospital. There are two supermarkets but no big box retail or department stores. There are pubs but no cinema. This means that Ōtaki residents have to travel outside Ōtaki for many services and recreation.

In a recent survey of young people in the District, transport was raised as a significant issue particularly for Ōtaki. Young people found it difficult to get around and relied on bus services. They raised concerns about frequency, including a lack of service on the weekend, reliability and cost.

Unlike the south of the District, Ōtaki receives some central and regional government services from Palmerston North/Manawatu Region. Examples include health through Mid-Central District Health Board, some social support services funded through Ministry of Social Development, police services. This necessitates Ōtaki residents travelling both north to Levin and Palmerston North for services as well as south.

ATTACHMENT 3: WAIKANAE BUS SERVICE CHANGES FEBRUARY 2011

