

Informal Workshop Notes

Public Transport Committee Workshop

Held: 9.30 am, Wednesday 24 May 2023, Bay of Plenty Regional Council Chambers, Regional House, 1 Elizabeth Street, Tauranga and via Zoom (Audio Visual Meeting)

Chairperson: Cr Andrew von Dadelszen - Bay of Plenty Regional Council
Toi Moana (BOPRC)

Deputy Chairperson: Cr Lyall Thurston - BOPRC

Present: BOPRC: Cr Jane Nees; Cr Paula Thompson; Cr Malcolm Campbell

Whakatāne District Council (WDC): Deputy Mayor Andrew Iles; Cr Gavin Dennis (Alternate)

Tauranga City Council (TCC):
Commissioner Stephen Selwood

Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC): Mayor James Denyer; Deputy Mayor John Scrimgeour (Alternate) via Zoom

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi): Sarah Roberts - Regional System Design Advisor (Alternate).

Non-Members in Attendance: Cr Kat Macmillan - BOPRC (via Zoom); Sarah Hiestand - Senior Transport Advisor, Waka Kotahi.

In Attendance: BOPRC: Mike Seabourne - Director, Public Transport; Oliver Haycock - Manager, Transport Planning; Bron Healey - Principal Advisor -Transport; Elaine Nolan - Transport Coordinator; Kim McFaddan - Communications Partner, Claudia Cameron - Committee Advisor

WDC: Joe Metcalfe - Transport Planner, WDC; .

Apologies: Cr Conan O'Brien - Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC); Mayor Tania Tapsell - RLC (Alternate); Commissioner Bill Wasley - TCC.

1. Introduction

An introduction was provided by Mike Seabourne – Director, Public Transport.

Key Points:

- There was a clear mandate through the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) to deliver public transport (PT) projects
- Guidance was sought on the prioritisation of resources and sequencing of project delivery
- Outlined the three teams within the Transport Team: Transport Operations, Transport Planning and Transport Programme Delivery
- Planning and preparation was required to meet the region's future PT needs.

Key Points - Members:

- Noted an increase in intra-regional travel and the need for an integrated regional transport system
- Highlighted the need for funding/resource equity across the region.

2. Discussion

2.1 Public Transport Committee Strategic Issues Workshop

Tabled Document 1 - BOPRC Transport Team Structure: Objective ID A4383031 [⇒](#)

Tabled Document 2 - Prioritisation Activity - 24 May 2023: Objective ID A4388806 [⇒](#)

Presented by: Bron Healey – Principal Advisor, Transport
Mike Seabourne – Director, Public Transport
Oliver Haycock – Manager, Transport Planning.

Introduction:

- Initial planning was underway for the Long Term Plan 2024-2034, noting there was increased competition for Waka Kotahi funding
- Recognised the challenge of a growing city meeting vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) reduction targets – projects must consider this as well as mode shift
- Challenges included:
 - Inflationary pressures
 - Changing Government policy on fares, and the upcoming replacement of the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) with the Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF)
 - Increased 'business as usual' (BAU) for the team as networks grew in complexity
 - Contract renewal timelines
 - Competitive resource market, in particular for skilled network planners – noting collaborative partners were also facing a shortage of skilled planners.

10.27 am – the workshop **adjourned.**

10.34 am – the workshop **reconvened.**

Mode Shift and Carbon Reduction:

- Public transport service levels/infrastructure delivery
 - An increase in service levels was required. As there were currently no spare buses, service improvements required careful consideration
 - SPTF provided potential opportunities for investment into infrastructure and vehicle ownership
 - Community willingness for innovative change was apparent
 - There was a commitment to refresh the Eastern Bay of Plenty (EBOP) network, however no resources were currently allocated
 - Noted smaller bus purchase and operation was of a comparable cost to larger buses, patronage growth must be considered before committing to a fleet of smaller buses.

Guidance:

- Suggested investigation into an additional contract with a smaller sized bus provider, to allow flexibility of bus size on certain routes
 - Requested a roadmap of key PT corridor upgrades and changes
 - An EBOP network refresh was supported.
- Zero emission public transport
 - Decarbonisation was in line with BOPRC values
 - Supported emission reduction trials conducted collaboratively under the facilitation of Waka Kotahi, not individual council by council trials.

Guidance:

- Requested information be sought from Waka Kotahi around emissions trials currently underway nationally
 - Supported being 'fast-followers' in this space, as opposed to our region conducting a trial
 - Suggested the on-demand trial be electric vehicle based to demonstrate a shift towards zero emission PT.
- On demand public transport
 - The Tauranga trial was moving from planning to implementation
 - There would be minor savings to the fixed route service, but would not off-set the trial cost.

Guidance

- Future extension was dependent on the outcome of the trial.
- Rapid Transit
 - Further resources would be required for rapid transit corridors if signalled as a priority
 - The Cameron Road Stage 2 Project prioritised buses via am/pm peak bus lanes, clear communication was needed
 - Planning had taken place via the Urban Form and Transport Initiative (UFTI) and the Transport System Plan (TSP), a programme of delivery from a technical perspective would be recommended via the Public Transport Service and Infrastructure Business Case
 - Highlighted the Greater Christchurch Rapid Transit project as a success story:
<https://www.greaterchristchurch.org.nz/assets/Documents/greaterchristchurch/Mass-Rapid-Transit/Greater-Christchurch-Mass-Rapid-Transit-Interim-Report-June-2021.pdf>

Guidance:

- Future proofing of PT rapid transit corridors was required via the spatial plan
 - Acknowledged that once planning was complete, it would be up to councils to implement.
- Passenger rail/ferries
 - Inter-regional rail was dependent on other councils' willingness to collaborate - highlighted the 'Making Rail Work' initiative
 - The Ōmokoroa-Tauranga travel environment had changed since the Wednesday Challenge ferry trial, ferries may be seen as a more viable alternative now
 - Highlighted the reduced infrastructure required for ferries compared to rail
 - Suggested the current subsidy of buses between Ōmokoroa and Tauranga could also be applied to ferries.

Guidance:

- Staff to follow up with adjacent councils to gauge appetite for rail
- Supported an investigation into a ferry service.

Public transport and land use:

- Proactively planning for public transport and land use integration
 - Acknowledge the growth of the Western Bay and Rotorua subregions, PT services would be required to support these developments
 - Noted the two vacant staff positions within the Transport Spatial Planning team.

Guidance:

- Transport spatial planning required a fit for purpose level of resource allocation.

11.57 am - Cr Paula Thompson **withdrew** from the workshop.

Fares and pricing:

- Fare Policy
 - There was a need to change the perception that PT was only for people unable to use private vehicles
 - Staff were awaiting further guidance from Central Government and Waka Kotahi around the implementation of the new free fares for children under 13 years.

Guidance:

- Acknowledgement of fares and pricing as an operational issue once policy had been developed.

- Special event policy
 - Requests were received regularly for special event buses, and a policy statement/framework was required.

Guidance:

- This was not seen as an urgent project.

Service planning and design:

- Network refreshes

- Network refreshes required specialist network planning skills, current resources allowed only for the continual programme of consecutive refreshes; the planning stage caused a 'bottle neck' due to staff availability
- Noted the 'trade off' in resources between spatial planning and network refreshes.

Guidance:

- The network and refreshes should be prioritised
 - Suggested a collaboration between BOPRC and other councils' planners and roading teams, to enable network refreshes to progress ahead of time - in particular the EBOP network refresh.
- School services (Tauranga)
 - Noted the potential unpopularity of reintegrating the school service into the main network, and that consultation would likely be required.

Guidance:

- Care, clarity and time would be required if a change was to be made.

- Regional services

- The core business should be conducted first.

Guidance:

- Interregional bus travel was considered a commercial operation at this stage.

- Community services

- Noted the Community Transport Forum.

Guidance:

- Community services should be considered during network refreshes, with collaborative opportunities explored.

3. Conclusion and Next Steps

Members were invited to prioritise the issues discussed - see *Tabled Document 2 - Prioritisation Activity - 24 May 2023*. Results of this activity and guidance provided would be reviewed by staff.

12.31 pm - the workshop **closed**.