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**Project title: Bus Priority**  
**Strategy area: Transport**

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## 1. The Proposal

To develop and implement a bus priority plan for the city. This is to meet the growing demand for travel and to provide a viable alternative mode which is attractive to users. This project will also link closely with work streams identified by the Travel Demand management initiative.

## 2. Strategic Fit

This priority explicitly contributes to the following Council outcomes:

*Outcome 1: More Liveable* – by facilitating an integrated transport system that functions effectively for people and freight.

*Outcome 7: Better Connected* – by enhancing the State Highway system from the north to the airport for freight, service vehicles and high occupancy vehicles.

*Outcome 8: More Sustainable* – by improving traffic flow (and reducing emissions) through improving bottlenecks.

The priority also contributes to the urban development, economic and social development strategy outcomes. It has been selected as number 3 priority in the Council's Transport Strategy and number 11 overall.

The development of a bus priority plan which will play a significant role in the transport system of the city will also contribute toward the movement of people along the urban development strategy growth spine.

## 3. Relationship to Existing Activities

The Council together with other stakeholders has been implementing bus priority measures for a number of years. This has included

- Completion of Lambton Interchange
- Upgrade and installation of new bus shelters
- Construction of covered walkways and pedestrian shelters
- Introduction of bus lanes
- Bus advance phase at traffic signals

Added to this are improvements in service frequency and the introduction of new services by GWRC. Stagecoach have improved the quality and reduced the age of their fleet.

Progress is regularly monitored and key parties involved in the improvement of public transport are signed up to a Quality Partnership Agreement. (WCC, GWRC, Stagecoach, TollRail).

Going forward these incremental improvements across a number of fronts would continue to be made by the various stakeholders involved

#### 4. Proposal Costs

<i>Outline project costs per year</i>										
Project Component	Operating expenses \$000									
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
<i>Consultants Fees</i>	50	25	20	10	10	5	5			
<i>Maintenance of signs and markings</i>	50	50	50	50	50	60	70	75	75	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>

Project Component	Capital expenses \$000									
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
<i>Implementation of Bus lanes</i>		1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	500	500	500	500
<i>Land acquisition</i>		50	500	500	250	250	250	250		
<i>Bus facility improvements</i>	*	*	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Pedestrian weather protection</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1700</b>	<b>1700</b>	<b>1450</b>	<b>1450</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>700</b>

\* Budget already identified in LTCCP under CX431

It is proposed that the above budget sums be added to the existing CX135 Passenger Transport network upgrades project to achieve this initiative.

Elements of the project will attract LTNZ funding at a rate of 48% where clear benefits can be shown for all traffic. It is expected this will be the case for 50% of the expenditure budgeted above.

#### 5. Project Outline

##### **Feasibility Concept Development, 05-06**

Develop a comprehensive City wide bus priority plan during 05/06 for sign off by the Council identifying priorities for implementation. The plan will cover the routes listed below. It will also look at complementing this with park and ride facilities. The plan will develop the detail of each scheme by corridor, identifying all impacts of implementing each component of the bus priority measures employed. The impacts are primarily expected to be, parking, effects on adjacent businesses, local residents, pedestrians, physical constraints, costs and any likely enforcement issues. It will also include input from the bus operators and Greater Regional Council in its development.

### **Detailed Design, 06-07**

If adopted detailed design work will commence in 06/07 together with consultation on each scheme.

### **Implementation, 07 onwards**

Implementation of any acceptable proposal will start in 07/08 and is likely to start in the CBD and radiate out to key suburbs. This approach is more likely to provide the greatest benefit to the highest number of passengers rather than introducing the schemes by corridor.

### **Outline**

The elements of the plan are:

#### ***State Highway***

Investigate the feasibility of providing full time/part time transit lane on the State Highway to City.

- Transit lanes on State Highway 1/Hutt Road from Tawa to Onslow Road and reverse.
- Transit lanes on State Highway 2/Hutt Road from Petone to Onslow Road and reverse.

These plans would be developed in conjunction with Transit NZ as the State Highway controller primarily utilising existing road shoulder areas. A more ambitious plan is required for the State Highway 2 where the road corridor is already narrow and requires widening to achieve an optimum balance for all modes. This envisages two full time traffic lanes and a full time transit lane in each direction.

#### ***Suburbs to City***

Investigate the feasibility of providing full time/part time bus lanes into and out of the central city on the following corridors:

- Hutt Road (at Onslow Road) to City along Thorndon Quay and reverse
- Nagio to City and reverse
- Karori to City and reverse
- Kilbirnie to City via Newtown and reverse
- Kilbirnie to City via Hatatiti and reverse
- Island Bay to City and reverse
- Brooklyn to City and reverse

These routes would primarily be developed as part time peak lanes utilising roadside parking areas during operation of the bus lane. Some local widening would be required or footpath narrowing to achieve this in places. Loss of parking at peak operating times along residential and shopping street frontages will be a particular issue to address.

### ***Central City***

Investigate the feasibility of providing full time/part time bus lanes through the Central City along the following corridors

- Kent and Cambridge Tce
- Courtenay Place
- Willis Street
- Lambton Quay
- Thorndon Quay
- The Terrace

This work will focus on developing capacity in the Golden mile to accommodate the predicted growth in bus traffic. This may mean restrictions to general traffic during peak periods in areas such as Courtenay Place and further restrictions in the Dixon/Manners Street area. (A study will also be carried out to establish the maximum capacity of the Golden Mile to carry buses).

Investigate part time, peak period, lanes in Kent Tce, Cambridge Tce, The Terrace and Thorndon Quay.

Further enhancements for buses along Willis Street and Lambton Quay particularly exploring the use of traffic signals.

### ***Other Areas.***

Other suburban improvements are envisaged using feeder buses to service existing, enlarged and new park and ride stations either at railway stations or to engage with major through bus services. Routes, wherever it is practicable to do so, will be operated as ‘through running’ services. These services will start and finish well outside the city centre rather than be services which terminate at the centre of the network

### ***Improved Accessibility***

Advocate to GWRC for improved bus service frequency.

Include a new City Shopper service to link Lambton Quay, Willis Street, Cuba Street, Taranaki Street, Ghuznee Street, The Terrace to compliment the City Circular.

Further links to the Northern Gateway area will also be required where significant development is expected to occur.

### ***Improved Amenity***

Improve waiting facilities at each bus stop.

Continue to improve weather protection from railway station to inner city streets.

### ***Improved Fleet***

Advocate for high quality, clean, comfortable vehicles to encourage higher patronage.

Advocate for hybrid buses including diesel-electric, hydrogen-electric, stored electric options to promote quiet, non polluting CBD running.

### ***Performance Measures***

Recent quality of life surveys show that satisfaction with public transport is high. 47% of people surveyed use public transport at least once a week. Some 75% believe that public transport is affordable and 87% agree that public transport is safe.

These should be maintained or improved going forward.

Possible new performance indicators could be:

There is no growth in trips made by car into the central city during the morning peak based on 2005 figures.

The percentage share of trips made by bus for journey to work increases.

More specially for the introduction of each bus priority measure, performance measures could be:

That the scheme makes savings of Xmins per bus.

That the average journey time of the bus in the peak two hour period is reduced by Y%.

This could be applied over the length of network covered by each or a series of measures.

### **Other Considerations**

It should be emphasised that there are significant immediate benefits which could be achieved on the busiest bus corridors in terms of bus times and reliability. However it is the busiest corridors which will present the greatest obstacles to the successful implementation of bus lanes. (e.g. road widening, parking removal, etc) with the consequent likelihood of public opposition.

However if bus lanes and other bus priority measures can be achieved on these main bus routes at an early date, they will provide the greatest benefits in the future as travel demand grows. It will be increasingly difficult to implement these projects in future years and therefore better to proceed with them as soon as possible.

Similarly there will be areas where the plan can be implemented well in advance of any real need for the bus priority measure. This again will be in an endeavour to provide a comprehensive network ahead of demand and to ensure reliability in the route for buses on which patronage can then be built. This will also draw opposition from those adversely affected who will, undoubtedly, question the need for such schemes ahead of the demand.

## **6. Conclusion**

It should be borne in mind that Wellington has the advantage of being relatively small and compact. It is unlikely that many new roads will be built within the medium term to accommodate growing traffic demands.

First and foremost we need to recognise that private transport is the preferred choice and dominant mode of transport, and programmes will continue to support its use. However to maintain the existing level of service enjoyed by these users in a environment where it is unlikely that significant new road capacity will be built, an active programme of providing a viable means of alternative transport needs to be followed. This alternative option needs to absorb any growth and increased demand for travel to seek to maintain at least the status quo.

Light rail options are not an affordable option at this time. Therefore bus public transport needs to be given priority to improve its reliability and appeal as a real transport choice for citizens. It is the appropriate mode to invest in so as to achieve both immediate and longer term gains.