

**Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public
Transport Working Party
Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 9.00am**

AGENDA

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Agenda

Meeting to be held in the NRC council chambers
36 Water Street,
Whangārei
on Tuesday 13 February 2024, commencing at 9.00am

Recommendations contained in the agenda are NOT decisions of the meeting. Please refer to minutes for resolutions.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT WDC-NRC WHANGAREI PUBLIC TRANSPORT WORKING PARTY

Chairperson, NRC Councillor Jack Crow

NRC Councillor Rick Stolwerk	NRC Councillor Joe Carr (Ex-Officio)	WDC Councillor Scott McKenzie
WDC Councillor Simon Reid	WDC Councillor Carol Peters	


RĪMITI (Item)	Page
1.0 NGĀ MAHI WHAKAPAI/HOUSEKEEPING	
2.0 NGĀ WHAKAPAHĀ/APOLOGIES	
3.0 NGĀ WHAKAPUAKANGA/DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	
4.0 NGĀ WHAKAAE MINITI / CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	
4.1 Confirmation of Minutes - 10 October 2023	3
5.0 RECEIPT OF ACTION SHEET	
5.1 Receipt of Action Sheet	7
6.0 REPORTS	
6.1 Operational report	9
6.2 Proposed Increase in Bream Bay Service and One Tree Point/Ruakaka Sweeper Service Investigation Update	15

TITLE: Confirmation of Minutes - 10 October 2023
From: Erica Wyatt, Personal Assistant - General Manager Community Resilience
Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 18 December 2023
Group Manager/s:

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the minutes of the Joint WDC-NRC Whangārei Public Transport Working Party meeting held on 10 October 2023, be confirmed as a true and correct record and that these be duly authenticated with the Chair's electronic signature.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Unconfirmed minutes 10 October 2023 [↓](#) 

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party
10 October 2023

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Minutes

Meeting held in the NRC, Water Street
Whangārei
Council Chambers
on Tuesday 10 October 2023, commencing at 8.41 am - 9.34 am

Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, NRC Councillor Jack Crow
NRC Councillor Rick Stolwerk (*online*)
WDC Councillor Simon Reid
WDC Councillor Carol Peters

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Full Meeting
Group Manager - Community Resilience, Louisa Gritt
NRC Secretariat, Gavin Dawson
NTA Transport Manager, Chris Powell
NTA Representative, Jeff Devine

The Chair declared the meeting open at 8.41 am.

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

Ngā whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

Moved (Crow / Reid)

That the apologies from Councillor Scott McKenzie (WDC) and NRC Councillor Joe Carr for non-attendance be received.

Carried

Nga whakapuakanga/Declarations of Conflicts of Interest (Item 3.0)

No conflicts of interest

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party
10 October 2023

Confirmation of Minutes - 1 August 2023 (Item 4.1)

Report from Erica Wade, Personal Assistant - General Manager Community Resilience

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

Moved (Stolwerk / Reid)

That the minutes of the Joint WDC-NRC Whangārei Public Transport Working Party meeting held on 1 August, be confirmed as a true and correct record and that these be duly authenticated with the Chair's electronic signature.

Carried

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 5.1)

Report from Erica Wade, Personal Assistant - General Manager Community Resilience

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

Moved (Stolwerk / Peters)

That the action sheet be received.

Carried

Whangarei Public Transport Update (Item 6.1)

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

Moved (Peters / Stolwerk)

That the report 'Whangarei Public Transport Update' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and dated 22 September 2023, be received.

Carried

Action Points

- Investigations & feasibility study into a second day service and a worker bus on the Bream Bay line to be investigated and options put to the group.
- Investigations to look at the progress of the Kamo bus route post-election and more detail on funding and that detail will be reported back.

Investigation into On-Demand Passenger Transport Services (Item 6.2)

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

Moved (Stolwerk / Peters)

That the report 'Investigation into On-Demand Passenger Transport Services' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and dated 22 September 2023, be received.

Carried

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party
10 October 2023

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 9.34 am.

TITLE: **Receipt of Action Sheet**

From: Erica Wyatt, Personal Assistant - General Manager Community Resilience

Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 05 February 2024
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to enable the meeting to receive the current action sheet.

Nga mahi tutohutia / Recommendation

1. That the action sheet be received.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Action Sheet [↓](#) 

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party - schedule of actions

Action Item	Meeting date	Item	Action	Responsible staff	Status	Notes
1	10/10/2023	Whangarei Public Transport Update (Item 6.1)	Investigations & feasibility study into a second day service and a worker bus on the Bream Bay line to be investigated and options put to the group.	NTA	In Progress	The findings of the investigation will be tabled at the 13 February 2024 meeting.
2	10/10/2023	Whangarei Public Transport Update (Item 6.1)	Investigations to look at the progress of the Kamo bus route post-election and more detail on funding and that detail will be reported back	NTA	In Progress	Staff awaiting feedback from Waka Kotahi NZTA on funding availability for the 2024/2027 funding period. This will determine what progress can be made. Early indications are for an extremely tight fiscal period.

TITLE: **Operational report**

From: Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 26 January 2024

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This report provides an update on the work undertaken in regard to public passenger transport in the Whangarei District since the last meeting of 10 October 2023.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

1. That the report 'Operational report' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator and dated 26 January 2024, be received.
-

Background/Tuhinga

SchoolLink Service

Meetings were held with Ritchies bus service during November and December 2023 regarding the driver availability for the proposed SchoolLink bus service. At the most recent meeting Ritchies advised that they have sufficient drivers to commence the service in the first school term of 2024.

In a recent conversation with the operator, they stated that this was their highest priority, but that driver availability continues to be challenging. Whilst they have new applicants coming through, there is a long process for new applicants to get their "P" endorsement on their licence and additional vetting from NZTA.

The proposed service will need to be reviewed as the operator has advised that they are concerned about High School students from different schools travelling on the same bus. All **MOE** routes for high schools in the area are now separate due to poor student behaviours. At the time of compiling this report, staff are organising further meetings with the operator to reach a consensus on the way forward.

Rose Street Bus Terminus Upgrade

The Whangarei District Council has confirmed that work will commence on the new Rose Street Bus Terminus building in March 2024 and is scheduled for completion in January 2025.

Posters have already been placed at Rose Street advising the public of this.



Totorā Park Bus Service

An opening event has been scheduled for Friday 9 February 2024 which will include a bus ride around the Totorā Park route for the residents of the village. The service is scheduled to start on Monday 12 February 2024. Staff have undertaken an extensive promotion programme for this new service and will monitor loadings as the service progresses.

Kamo Bus/T2 Lanes

Public consultation was undertaken between 4 October 2023 and 8 November 2023. This consisted of two online surveys and two in person drop-in sessions.

The outcome of the consultation and design reviews resulted in: -

- Redesign of section north of Whāu Valley Intersection.
- Changes to parking removal in some critical areas to support adjacent businesses.
- Compilation of a “Fact Sheet” with frequent questions and summary of project impacts, i.e. what your journey will be pre and post implementation if: -
 - no passengers
 - with passengers
 - on a bus.

The current phase of the project is to update the design and public information pack. Thereafter the public will be informed of the updated design and programme and seek feedback.

Please note that for this programme., the Whangarei District Council has until June 2025 to complete this project with 100% funding from the NZTA (Waka Kotahi) – Transport Choices package.

New Public Timetable and Bus Tracking System for CityLink

The Northland Regional Council has replaced its existing Real Time bus information system with a new updated and faster one. The new system, operated by Radiola and used by several other regional councils for their bus services, went operation at the end of December 2023. A live demonstration will be given at the 13 February 2024 meeting.

Whangarei A&P Show Bus Service

On Saturday 2nd December 2023, the Northland Regional Councils provided, over and above the normal Maunu service, additional buses direct to Barge Park to cater for people wanting to visit the Whangarei A&P Show.

This initiative was undertaken in an effort to reduce car travel and congestion around Barge Park. 780 passengers travelled free and by using the bus service were also provided free entry to the show. This initiative proved so successful that additional trips had to be added to meet the demand. Please see Attachment 1 for a letter received from the show organisers expressing their gratitude.

Funding and resources permitting, staff will look to operate the same service for the next A&P show. They will also be requesting that the Whangarei District Council provide the option of T2 lanes for the day to speed up travel.

Christmas/New Year Beach Buses

The beach buses operating to Oceans Beach and Ruakaka Beach on a Thursday over the Christmas/New Year period were again well received.

- 52 used the buses to Oceans Beach.
- 27 used the buses to Ruakaka Beach.

The growing success of these services can be seen when on Thursday 11 January 2024, an additional bus had to be introduced to the Oceans Beach run even after some passengers opted to go to Ruakaka instead.

Hikurangi Community Vehicle Trust

Significant progress has been made with the Hikurangi Community to set up Northland's first Community Vehicle Trust, an on-demand shuttle vehicle dedicated to transporting community members. The community has finalised the selection of the van, completed police vetting and health checks for the volunteer drivers, and made all necessary accounting and scheduling arrangements for the smooth execution of this initiative. The shuttle service is expected to be up and running sometime in February 2024.

Total Mobility Scheme.

The Whangarei Total Mobility Scheme usage continues to rise every month. With the heavily discounted fares being offered, this has now become the mode of choice for an increasing number of people. The Government recently announced that it will continue to offer increased subsidies on the Total Mobility Schemes national thereby allowing for the continuation of the client paying 25% of the total fare. This will result in continued and growing pressure on the existing budgets.

In an effort to alleviate the funding pressures, staff have written to some clients identified as high users, requesting they use the scheme only as necessary. This has yet to have the desired results.

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) is presently undertaking a national review of the Total Mobility Scheme. Councils have requested a comprehensive look into the eligibility criteria. The Terms of Reference for the review can be obtained from the following link: -

<https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/strategy-and-direction/review-of-the-total-mobility-scheme/>

Reduction in Community Connect Fares

On 20 December 2023, the Ministry of Transport advised council that the Government had announced the cancellation of the funding package to extend Community Connect to enable discounted half price fares for 13 to 24 years old and free fares for 5 – 12-year-olds.

Under the Community Connect Programme implementation agreement, the Ministry of Transport has given NZTA Waka Kotahi 90 days' notice that the funding for these subsidised services will end on 30 April 2024. NZTA have subsequently advised council of the same under the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement between NZTA and Public Transport Authorities (PTAs).

There is no change to the existing funding provided to Community Services Card holders to receive half price public transport fares or the funding that has made half price Total Mobility fares permanent.

The table below depicts the changes.


Fare Category	30 June 2023	1 July 2023	1 May 2024	Comments
	Passenger Pays	Passenger Pays	Passenger Pays	
Total Mobility	50% of Actual Fare	25% of Actual Fare	25% of Actual Fare	Government subsidy covers 75% of clients trip
Bus - Infant (0-4)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No Change
Bus – Children (4-12)	\$1.00	\$0.50c	\$1.00	Passenger fare reverts back to pre-1 July 2023 price
Bus – Young Person (13-18)	\$1.00	\$0.50c	\$1.00	Passenger fare reverts back to pre-1 July 2023 price
Bus – Young Person (18-24)	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$2.00	Passenger fare reverts back to pre-1 July 2023 price
Bus – Adult (18+)	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	No Change
Bus – Community Service Card Holder	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	Government subsidy covers 50% of clients trip

Future Funding for Public Passenger Transport Services and Infrastructure.

In addition to the reductions made to the Community Connect fares scheme, the Minister of Transport has stated that due to funding pressures being anticipated (increased funding to maintenance and road resilience), funding for new services and/or infrastructure will be extremely tight for the foreseeable future and existing services will be closely scrutinised to ascertain the need for continued funding assistance. This position has been reinforced at recent moderation sessions

with NZTA for passenger transport “Business as Usual” funding for the 2024/2027 financial period. A better understating of funding levels for all contracted passenger transport services will be known around April/May 2024. Once received, staff can then determine the way forward.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Letter of Appreciation from Whangarei A&P [↓](#) 

TITLE: **Proposed Increase in Bream Bay Service and One Tree Point/Ruakaka Sweeper Service Investigation Update**

From: Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 05 February 2024

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This report serves to update the Working Party on the progress made on the proposal to increase the Bream Bay bus service to have an additional trip implemented on a Tuesday and the feasibility and viability of introducing a sweeper type service through One Tree Point to link with the existing Bream Bay Link service.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

1. That the report 'Proposed Increase in Bream Bay Service and One Tree Point/Ruakaka Sweeper Service Investigation Update' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Transportation Alliance and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator and dated 5 February 2024, be received.
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Background/Tuhinga

Staff met with the present operator of the Bream Bay Link service to discuss the feasibility and viability of operating an additional trip on a Tuesday and operating a sweeper type service through One Tree Point to link with the existing Bream Bay Link service.

To gauge potential support for a sweeper type service in One Tree Point and possibly a daily service linking Waipu/Ruakaka/One Tree Point to Whangarei, staff have compiled a questionnaire for residents to complete.

Please see [Attachment I](#) for a copy of the questionnaire to be sent out.

In the meeting with the operator, he offered the suggestion of operating the Tuesday service from Kaiwaka via Maungaturoto to Waipu then via Ruakaka and One Tree Point to Whangarei.

Passenger numbers have shown a disappointingly low number of passengers boarding at Mangawhai but good support from Kaiwaka, Waipu and Ruakaka. The above suggestion would effectively allow for a once a week service for the Mangawhai residents and a once a week service for the people of Maungaturoto.

The above could be trialled for a six-month period.

The feasibility and viability of operating a daily commuter service from Waipu, Ruakaka and One Tree Point will depend on the outcome of the survey.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Survey for One Tree Point [↓](#) 