

**Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public
Transport Working Party
Tuesday 11 February 2025 at 9:00 am**

AGENDA

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Agenda

Meeting to be held in the NRC council chambers
36 Water Street
Whangarei
on Tuesday 11 February 2025, commencing at 9:00 am

Please note: working parties and working groups carry NO formal decision-making delegations from council. The purpose of the working party/group is to carry out preparatory work and discussions prior to taking matters to the full council for formal consideration and decision-making. Working party/group meetings are open to the public to attend (unless there are specific grounds under LGOIMA for the public to be excluded).

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

Chairperson, Councillor Rick Stolwerk
NRC Councillor, Jack Crow WDC Councillor, Scott McKenzie WDC Councillor, Simon Reid
WDC Councillor, Carol Peters NRC Councillor, Joe Carr


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TITLE: Confirmation of Minutes - 1 October 2024
From: Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience
Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 22 January 2025
Group Manager/s:

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the minutes of the Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party meeting held on 1 October 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record and that these be duly authenticated by the Chair.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Minutes - 1 October 2024 [↓](#) 

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party
1 October 2024

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Minutes

Meeting held in the NRC council chambers
36 Water Street,
Whangārei
on Tuesday 1 October 2024, commencing at 9.00am

Tuhinga/Present:

Chairperson, NRC Councillor Rick Stolwerk
NRC Councillor Jack Crow
WDC Councillor Carol Peters
NRC Councillor Joe Carr
WDC Councillor Simon Reid (arrived 09.09am)

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Full Meeting

NRC Transport Manager, Chris Powell
NRC Regional Transport Coordinator, Kayla Gunson
NRC Secretariat, Haylee Labelle

Part Meeting

NRC Transport Project Officer, Dean Mitchell (left 09.25am)
Otago Regional Council - Regional Integrated Ticketing Solution Contract
Manager, Paul Everitt (left 09.25am)

The Chair declared the meeting open at 0900am. Cr Peters opened with a Karakia

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

Ngā whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

Moved

That the apologies from WDC Councillor Scott McKenzie and GM Community Resilience Louisa Gritt for non-attendance be received.

Carried

Confirmation of Minutes - 25 July 2024 (Extraordinary) (Item 4.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Peters/Carr)

That the minutes of the Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Extraordinary meeting held on 25 July 2024, be confirmed as a true and correct record and that these be duly authenticated by the Chair.

Carried

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party
1 October 2024

Receipt of Action Sheet - 1 October 2024 (Item 5.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved

That the action sheet be received.

Carried

Presentation - National Ticketing Solution (Item 6.1)

Presentation from Paul Everitt, Otago Regional Council

Moved

That the presentation "National Ticketing Solution" by Paul Everitt, Otago Regional Council and dated 18 September 2024, be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes – The purpose of the ticketing solution is to provide a national standardised electronic ticketing system that will be both easier to administer and for customers to use. This will be also be used on trains (AKL/WGTM) and on ferries where applicable.

Prior to introduction customers will be asked to run the balances down on their existing cards as we cannot transfer money to their bank accounts. The Bee Card will be discontinued as customers use Motu Move cards/credit cards/eftpos/cash to pay. There will be no transaction fees to use a credit card for payment. Physical cards will still be available e.g. children won't have a credit/eftpos card so will use the 'Motu Move' card.

The intent is no transfers from the Bee Card. Customers to use up balance on their Bee Card prior to introduction. It is easy for staff to view balances as the be ecard website exists until the last changeover to the new system.

There will be a national retail network managed by NZTA e.g. dairies. There will also be an NZTA 0800 number for customer support.

A staged delivery will be followed due to large amount of work for changing equipment in busses is a big job e.g. 3000 buses as the current system not compatible with new one. We have asked for everything to be done for Northland e.g. Kaitiaki and Hokianga. Whangarei is currently the only full electronic provider in Northland so the concern of balances wont impact the far north who currently use cash.

There may be local costs which are not budgeted for in the LTP but ongoing implementation costs go to NZTA.

Northland is scheduled for NTS implementation in November 2025

Operational Report (Item 6.2)

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator

Moved

That the report 'Operational Report' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator and dated 13 August 2024, be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Staff will be undertaking a full review of all contracted passenger services managed by the NRC. This review will include input from the community and the operators. Consultation will be undertaken through media, online outlets and through public surveys.

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party
1 October 2024

Chris and Dean are planning to visit the CityLink operator to discuss the ongoing SchoolLink driver shortage issue.

Update received from Jeff Devine on T2 lanes that there is one more decision to be made by WDC regarding the funds required which has increased from \$341k to approx. \$500k to account for cost increases for traffic light phasing and road marking into Kamo.

The release of the additional funds needs to be voted on by the WDC. The meeting is Thursday 10 October 9am. The WPTWP members are supportive of the work proceeding and request a letter of support be generated to be tabled at the meeting. Cr Craw will attend this meeting to encourage a vote of support.

The Total Mobility scheme continues to grow rapidly. The Ministry of Transport review into the eligibility criteria for clients, operators and funding requirements continues.

WDC are looking to start work on the first phase of Rose Street bus terminal late October/early November (talking about building only). Will need to move buses, ticket office and toilets during construction phase. No finish date provided as yet.

Passenger numbers on the SchoolLink service continue to climb. No ongoing or serious incident at Rose Street.

Survey drafted for Bream Bay Link service extension.

Other discussion took place about endorsing 4 lanes from Whau Valley lights to Kensington Avenue to ease congestion, this would require a report.

Action:

- 1. NRC Transport Manager to provide Cr Stolwerk a timeline for the Bream Bay link service extension survey**
- 2. NRC Transport manager to draft a letter of support to go to WDC by 10/10/24 advocating for an increase in local share to \$500k due to light phasing and other factors for stage 2 of T2 lanes**

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 9.53am with karakia by Cr Stolwerk

TITLE: **Receipt of Action Sheet**

From: Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Authorised by Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 22 January 2025
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

That the action sheet be received.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Action Sheet [↓](#) 

Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Action Sheet

| Action | Meeting date | Agenda Item | Action | Person(s) responsible | Status | Notes |
|--------|--------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------|---|
| 1 | 1/10/2024 | 6.2 Operational Report | NRC Transport Manager to provide Cr Stolwerk a timeline for the Bream Bay link service extension survey | Chris Powell | Complete | 18/10/2024 |
| 2 | 1/10/2024 | 6.2 Operational Report | NRC Transport manager to draft a letter of support to go to WDC by 10/10/24 advocating for an increase in local share to \$500k due to light phasing and other factors for stage 2 of T2 lanes | Chris Powell | Complete | 8/10/24 email signed by chair sent to WDC |

TITLE: **Operational Report**

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

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 23 January 2025

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This report provides an update to the Whangarei District Council/Northland Regional Council Public Transport Working Party (WPTWP) on the various Whangarei passenger transport services in operation and projects being undertaken since the last meeting of 1 October 2024.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the report 'Operational Report' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and Kayla Gunson, Regional Transport Coordinator and dated 13 December 2024, be received.

Background/Tuhinga

CityLink and SchoolLink Services

Passenger trends remain consistent with previous years. There was an obvious dip in passenger numbers over the Christmas and school holiday periods. This will carry through to January 2025.

Service operations have been as per scheduled with continued monitoring of performance through the electronic bus positioning programme.

Staff will commence a full Network Performance Analysis to assess operational efficiency during the 2025 calendar year.

Of the six SchoolLink buses scheduled to operate, one has been removed due to poor patronage. These scholars have been accommodated on the other buses with no problems experienced. A number of school children still use the CityLink service due to wanting to meet with friends or spend time in town.

The introduction of the Customer Liaison Officer at the Rose Street Terminus has been a success with a number of positive comments being made by the public.

Christmas/New Year Beach Bus Service

Whilst there was a promising response to the survey undertaken on the beach buses for 2024, unfortunately, due to the less-than-ideal weather conditions (continuous winds) over the Christmas/New Year period, this service was poorly patronised.

Rose Street Bus Terminus - Update

The Whangarei District Council (WDC) had planned to close off the Rose Street Bus Terminus on Wednesday 8 January 2025 to commence work on the new building. The CityLink service is to be temporarily relocated to the bottom end of Vine Street. This will include the installation of a Portacom office and toilet facilities in the Vine Street car park.

The use of Vine Street as a temporary bus stop facility was done successfully during the construction of the new bus shelters at the Rose Street Terminus.

T2 Lanes - Update

WDC have advised that they: -

- Are on track to have all line markings and concrete works (minor) for the entire route completed by the end of March 2025.
- Will be reintroducing into the design five signalled crossings to allow pedestrians to safely cross the three lanes. These are scheduled for completion at the end of April 2025.
- Are currently working through the details relating to enforcement.

NRC staff have continued discussions with the CityLink operator on the increased schedule for this service. In an effort to make maximum use of peak vehicle capacity and reduce empty positioning kilometres, the additional buses will do the entire Kamo/Tikipunga route.

The operator has provided a figure of \$215,000 per annum for these additional trips.

As has been stated at previous WPTWP meetings where this matter has been discussed, the ability of the operator to source drivers to operate these trips will be the determining factor on how these additional trips will be introduced.

The original plan was to operate the present scheduled service on a trial basis for a few months to ascertain if in fact the T2 lanes were operating as intended. Should this trial prove successful, then additional trips would be introduced as more drivers became available until the full schedule was in operation.

Should the trial not be successful there will be no adverse impact on the operator and their newly employed drivers who could potentially face redundancy.

National Ticketing System (NTS)

The NTS Go-live "Phase" of the project was implemented on 8th December 2024 in Christchurch with no major on-road issues reported and patronage usage exceeding expectations.

However, there have been several issues identified in the back-office systems that need to be resolved. The speed and success of these being rectified is important if the present scheduled roll-out is to be met. This is being addressed through the technical working group.

Currently, the project is adhering to the accelerated implementation schedule, but the outcome of Release 1 testing in early January 2025 could potentially affect downstream milestones. Some functionalities are nearing completion, and work on device user interfaces will continue this year.

The Northland Regional Council is scheduled to go live September 2025. It is important to note at this time, that meeting the present agreed roll-out schedule times is dependent on the three larger parties (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch) agreeing on all aspects of the process ahead.

There has been an agreed approach to Bee card run downs and refunds with each PTA being responsible with the different media outlets engaged early for reminders etc starting 3 months prior to new system being implemented.

Bream Bay Link Service Extension

The Transport team conducted a comprehensive survey in the Bream Bay area and Maungaturoto to gather community feedback on the potential extension of the Bream Bay Link service. Additionally, the survey sought to collect insights on the public transport wants and needs of all residents within the Bream Bay area. The survey concluded on Tuesday, 10 December 2024. Four participants were selected in the prize draw, each receiving a \$50 Prezzy Card before Christmas.

The community demonstrated strong engagement with over 320 surveys submitted, reflecting substantial interest and input regarding the Bream Bay Link extension and the broader public transport needs of the area's residents.

The Transport team actively engaged with the community through various events, including One Tree Point markets, Bream Bay 60s+ meetings, Waipu Street & Park Market, Ruakaka and Waipu ratepayers meetings, and the Maungaturoto Residents Association meeting, ensuring broad participation and awareness.

The Transport team will analyse the survey results and community feedback to guide informed decisions on extending the Bream Bay Link to One Tree Point and Maungaturoto. The results and outcomes will be reported once the analysis is complete.

Hikurangi Link Service

On 1 November 2020, at the request of the WPTWP Elected Representatives, the Northland Regional Council (NRC) introduced a Thursday only service operating between Hikurangi and Whangarei.

This introduction of this service was supported by both the Hikurangi community and commercial sectors and was seen a way of providing public passenger transport to the financially disadvantaged who were struggling to get into Whangarei for medical appointments, shopping and social needs.

Despite numerous advertising and promotional exercise, passenger numbers remained low.

Following further discussions with the Hikurangi representative bodies, the NRC agreed to introduce an additional service on a Tuesday in an attempt to encourage more usage of the buses by local going into Whangarei and visitors having access into Hikurangi. This service commenced operation on 1 July 2023.

Unfortunately, to date there has been no growth in the Hikurangi Link service.

With the increasing pressure being placed on the availability of both local and national share funding assistance, the continued operation of this service can no longer be justified. It is therefore recommended that three months' notice be given for the removal of the Tuesday service and should there be no increase in passengers using the service, it be closed completely.

There is presently a community shuttle service operating in Hikurangi who could potentially take over these runs.

Total Mobility

For the months October 2024 to December a total of 10,818 trips were undertaken. This was a slight decrease for the same period last year. Expenditure followed the same trend.

The number of clients signing up to the Scheme in Whangarei continues to rise due to the 75% discounted travel. This has been exacerbated by funding cuts being experienced by various support agencies who are now wanting to provide their clients transport through the Total Mobility Scheme.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Nil

TITLE: NZTA Required Targets for Private Share Revenue

From: Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Louisa Gritt, Group Manager - Community Resilience, on 23 January 2025

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

Contained in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 is the requirement that Public Transport Authorities increase the private share of revenue for the payment of subsidised contracted public transport services. The NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi has been directed to ensure that this is undertaken.

This paper details the steps that the Northland Regional Council has undertaken to date on this matter.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommendation

That the report 'NZTA Required Targets for Private Share Revenue' by Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council and dated 16 December 2024, be received.

Background/Tuhinga

The Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 (GPS) calls on Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) to increase revenue from farebox recovery and other private sources. This aims to manage rising public transport costs while easing the financial burden on taxpayers and ratepayers.

Key directives in the GPS include:

- **Page 14:** Public Transport (2nd & 3rd paragraphs)
- **Page 23:** Strategic Priority: Value for Money (2nd bullet point)
- **Page 31:** Public Transport Services

Further details can be found here: [Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024](#).

In response, the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) held national meetings to outline expectations for implementing these changes. During these meetings, NRC raised concerns about including certain costs in farebox recovery calculations such as:

- Maintenance of facilities (e.g., bus shelters) owned by district councils.
- Costs related to the National Ticketing Solution, a government initiative.

These requests were declined. Additionally, the calculations exclude subsidies like the SuperGold Card (free travel for seniors), and Community Connect (half fares for eligible individuals).

NZTA Expectations and Meetings

The NZTA has set specific private revenue targets for the financial years 2024/25 to 2026/27. These targets encompass all contracted passenger services in Northland.

See Attachment I: NZTA letter on Private Share Revenue Targets.

Initial discussions between the NRC and NZTA on the 26 November 2024 and 5 December 2024 with no formal agreement being made on the proposed targets.

The Minister of Transport met with Public Transport Authority Chairs and CEOs following a letter from Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) who were representing the NTA's, disagreeing with the process NZTA were undertaking in this regard.

The outcome of the above meeting resulted in NZTA releasing a letter on 17 December 2024, granting additional time for further discussions between the two parties to reach an agreement on the required Private Share Revenue Targets.

Proposed Revenue Strategies

NRC staff have identified several strategies to increase private revenue, including:

- General fare increases.
- Advertising on buses, electronic timetables, real-time information screens, and onboard TV screens.
- Sponsorship of specific routes or services.

Fares Increase Proposal

To meet NZTA's targets, NRC proposes a general fare increase for all contracted bus services. For Whangarei, this includes include:

- **CityLink Service:** Restore fares to pre-2018 levels (Adult: \$3.00, Child: \$2.00) to recover revenue lost due to discounted fares introduced during the Bee Card transition.
- **Hikurangi Link Service:** Low passenger numbers may require service reductions or eventual removal. See Paper Titled "Operational Report", Hikurangi Link Service for further information on this service.
- **Bream Bay Link Service:** Fares have not increased since its trial inception in 2019. A fare increase for this service will be required.

Public Consultation

A comprehensive consultation process will be undertaken following finalisation of the NZTA/NRC negotiations on the Private Share Target Ratios and formal approval is received from the NRC to progress any fare increases.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Proposed Private Share Targets [↓](#) 

Supporting Information on Recent Fare Revisions

Impact of Covid19 on Link Services

In March 2020, Covid19 struck and continued through the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 financial year. During this period, the government introduced several national directives that resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of passengers carried and obviously farebox revenue recovered. This included passengers not having to pay fares to reduce contact of any form. The government did subsidise the full fare for all passengers carried during this period.

Please note that all Link Services operated during this period.

In the 2022/23 financial year, with the easing of Covid19 related restrictions, passenger numbers began to increase and have only recently returned to pre-Covid19 numbers.

Government Reduction in Fares Charged on Contracted Services

On 14 March 2022 the government directed that all public transport fares would be reduced by 50% from 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022 in response to a cost of living “crisis”, the continuing negative financial global impact caused by COVID and the sudden and marked increase in the price of fuel.

This half price fare scheme was extended to the 31 August 2022, then to 31 January 2023 and finally to 30 June 2023.

The government subsidised the difference in fares during this period.

On 1 July 2023, the government implemented their Community Connect Fare Reduction Policy which allowed for: -

- Free Travel for all persons between the ages of 5 – 12 years.
- Half price travel for all persons between the ages of 13 – 24 years.
- Full fares for all persons over the age of 24.
- Half price fares for all Community Service card holders.

Again, the government covered the difference between the full fare and the discounted fares.

On 1 May 2024, the new government ceased subsidisation of half price fares for 13 to 24 years old and free fares for 5 – 12-year-olds. This resulted in all passengers in these age groups reverting to paying the full fare as charged prior to the introduction of the Community Connect Fare Reduction Policy.

These fares remain in place today.



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Memo

Private Bag 106602, Auckland City, Auckland 1143

To Northland Regional Council
From Lisa Grindlay, Senior Advisor - Public Transport
Date 18/11/2024
Subject Increasing the private share of public transport operating expenditure – proposed regional targets for Northland

The GPS 2024 includes a statement of [ministerial expectations](#) that apply to NZTA and approved organisation. NZTA is expected to ensure public transport authorities take appropriate steps to meet these ministerial expectations and comply with self-assessment and reporting requirements.

To meet these expectations public transport authorities are required to meet the following [specific requirements](#):

- Actively engage with NZTA to agree and set interim private share targets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 and indicative targets for 2026/27 **by 19 December 2024** and longer-term targets, including reviewing and confirming 2026/27 targets, by 19 December 2025.

The purpose of this memo is to propose for discussion interim private share targets for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years and an indicative target for the 2026/27 financial year for the Northland region.

The basis for the proposed targets is set out in the 'Increasing the private share of public transport operating expenditure Discussion document' that was released on 18 November 2024.

The proposed targets are set out in Table 1 below. While targets will vary by region based on relevant context, we expect the national private share to be within the target ranges set by the NZTA Board, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Regional targets to be agreed with NZTA

| PTA region | Private share 2018/19 Actual | Private share 2023/24 Actual | Proposed private share 2024/25 Interim Target | Proposed private share 2025/26 Interim Target | Proposed private share 2026/27 Indicative Target |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Northland | 20.1% | 11.6% | 16% | 19% | 22% |
| National | 33.0% | 20.5% | 24-26% | 28-33% | 35-40% |

Our first meeting to engage on the document and the proposed targets is scheduled for Tuesday 26 November 2024.

If you have any questions ahead of that meeting or would like to discuss any aspect of the approach further, please reach out to me via email at lisa.grindlay@nzta.govt.nz.

File Ref 1