

Joint WDC-NRC Whangarei Public Transport Working Party Minutes

Meeting held in the NRC Council Chambers
36 Water Street, Whangarei
on Tuesday 11 February 2025, commencing at 9:00 am

Present:

Chairperson, Councillor Rick Stolwerk
NRC Councillor Jack Crow
WDC Councillor, Scott McKenzie (online)
WDC Councillor, Simon Reid
WDC Councillor, Carol Peters (online – joined at 9.08am)
NRC Councillor, Joe Carr

In Attendance:

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

The Chair declared the meeting open at 0900am. Karakia by Cr Crow

Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

Apologies (Item 2.0)

There were no apologies.

Confirmation of Minutes - 1 October 2024 (Item 4.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Stolwerk/Crow)

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.

Carried

Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 5.1)

Report from Haylee Labelle, Personal Assistant Community Resilience

Moved (Stolwerk/Crow)

That the action sheet be received.

Carried

Secretarial notes: Following the meeting, NRC secretariat forwarded the email from action 2, 1/10/24 to Cr Crow, Cr Carr, Cr Peters, Cr McKenzie.

Operational Report (Item 6.1)

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

Moved (Stolwerk/Reid)

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.

Carried

Secretarial notes:

- Whangarei Boys and Girls high requested an additional bus service at 3:30 PM due to high demand, with 34 names collected for the new service. This request is under consideration.
- The temporary terminal at Vine Street - expected to be in place until June. The setup includes a Portacom office, three toilets, and sourcing seating for elderly people.
- There have been complaints from two shops about buses loading and unloading outside their premises (in the temporary location), causing inconvenience due to people milling around and occupying car parks.
- Matapouri and Waipu proved to be a good choice for the Beach Bus Service

T2 Lanes Update: Now expected to be completed by the 26 May. They will only operate between the hours of 0700-0900 weekdays.

- The five signal crossings will have traffic lights that trigger when pedestrians are present
- Enforcement will be carried out using cameras and staff monitoring traffic flow. The lanes are designated for buses, coaches, taxis, emergency vehicles, and cars with two or more people.
- Concerns raised about the T2 lane on Bank Street being too narrow for buses. The inside lane appears very thin, resembling a wide bike lane, while the outside lane is extremely wide.
- There have been complaints about the poor coverage of old lane markings, which are confusing for drivers. The current solution involves using dark grey paint, but a better solution is being sought, possibly involving adding chip to the paint.
- A parking bay will be installed by the Rail Crossing on Kamo Road which will ensure the safety of freight/trucks unloading at the shops

National Ticketing System: Known as the Motu Move card, will allow travel on any council-contracted service nationwide, excluding commercially operated services like Intercity buses, trains, and ferries.

- The implementation of the national ticketing system has been delayed from the proposed September 2025 go live date by three to four months due to difficulties in meeting the diverse needs of regional councils
- The system is currently being trialled in Christchurch, where back-office issues are being identified and resolved. These trials are crucial to ensure the system works smoothly before wider implementation.
- There was a discussion about the refund policy for the current B card balances. It was noted that during the transition from Snapper card to B card, only a small number of refunds were issued, and a similar approach may be taken for the new system.

Hikurangi Link Service: Recommended providing a three-month notice for the withdrawal of the Tuesday link service due to low patronage

- Discussed the possibility of passengers using the community-based van service operated by the Hikurangi Business Association. This service is already subsidized and could serve as an alternative for affected passengers.

Total Mobility Scheme: The present system is not financially sustainable

- *The Ministry of Transport is conducting a national review of the total mobility scheme, focusing on eligibility criteria.*
- *Discussed the need to review the eligibility criteria to ensure that only those who genuinely need it are enrolled. This could help control costs and ensure the scheme's sustainability. Noted this is outside WPTWP sphere of influence, we can only influence % of subsidy*
- *Discussed possibility of reverting the subsidy back to 50% to better manage the financial impact.*
- *Encourage staff to raise concerns of eligibility ahead of subsidy*

Actions:

2. **NRC Transport Manager to confirm the locations of the five signal crossings and circulate this information to WPTWP members**
3. **NRC Transport Manager to communicate with Laura at WDC regarding the narrow markings on Bank Street and confusing lane coverings**
4. **NRC Transport Manager to obtain and circulate plans of roundabout portion of T2 lanes**
5. **Take paper to Council meeting in March with the recommendation to withdraw the Tuesday Hikurangi Link Service service**
6. **The team to engage with the Hikurangi Business Association Group to discuss the transition and support for the existing community van service.**

NZTA Required Targets for Private Share Revenue (Item 6.2)

Report from Chris Powell, Transport Manager - Northland Regional Council

Moved (Stolwerk/Craw)

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.

Carried

Secretarial notes: The Minister wants to see an increase in private share funding and have left councils to decide. Discussed proposal to revert bus fares to their 2018 levels due to increased operational costs and the need to meet government funding requirements. Adult fares will increase from \$2 to \$3 and child fares from \$1 to \$2.

- *Discussed the impact on passengers and emphasized the need for public consultation to explain the fare increase and gather feedback. Effective communication strategies, including community meetings and surveys, will be employed to ensure transparency and public understanding.*
- *The fare increase is expected to impact passengers, particularly school children and low-income individuals. Measures such as maintaining half-price fares for community service cardholders will be considered to mitigate the impact.*
- *Alternative revenue strategies, such as advertising on buses, were discussed but deemed insufficient to cover the funding gap. The fare increase is seen as the most viable solution to ensure the financial sustainability of the bus services.*
- *WPTWP supports the fare increase*

Actions:

- **NRC Transport Manager to obtain data on the impact of school bus services reducing congestion on roads (the measure of term time vs non term time)**
- **Comms about consultation for fare increases to include the chair of WPTWP**

Conclusion

The meeting concluded at 09.59am