

# REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN

2024-2034



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## 1. Summary

This Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) details the investment programme required to increase the role public transport (PT) plays in the delivery of a multimodal sustainable transport future for the Nelson Tasman region. Both Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council have placed climate change and carbon emission reduction amongst their highest priorities and community outcomes for the coming years.

This RPTP has been prepared to deliver ongoing improvement to the public transport network system in the wider Nelson Tasman area over the next 10 years. It focuses on delivering a system that builds on the step change that was delivered by the recent introduction of eBus services.

This programme of investment has been developed recognising:

1. Very strong community support for the recently introduced eBus service, but that increased service frequency and more timely journeys are desired by users.
2. The extent of public transport mode shift required to meet the targets of the Emissions Reduction Plan including reducing the vehicle kilometres travelled by 20%.
3. Align with of recommendations of the Nelson Future Access Study (NFA) and the Richmond Business Case (RBC). Mode shift is an essential aspect of the overall packages of works to achieve the outcomes of these two projects critical to the management of the future travel requirements of our growing communities across Nelson and Tasman. The NFA has identified specific public transport use targets within the overall package of projects and targets, similarly the RBC includes public transport improvements in the key packages of work required.

The RPTP supports accessibility and good urban design, provides a large proportion of our residents with a viable alternative to using the private car, is sustainable, affordable, and contributes to meeting our emission reduction targets.

It has been prepared as a partnership between Tasman District Council and Nelson City Council, with our funding partner Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi), with the intent of providing the wider community with an aligned, improved public transport service integrated across the district.

Investment is proposed to continue the service delivery of the eBus and integrate public transport with other active mode options. The programme links closely with investments in active transport, linking journeys, accessibility between modes, minimising journey barriers and enabling users to enjoy all the health, choice, access and wellbeing benefits that transport choices provide.

The Future Development Strategy (FDS) has provided an important direction to this Plan, since it indicates where population is expected to increasingly concentrate in the future, both within the urban area and in the surrounding regional areas. The planned growth and intensification is likely to amplify demand for public transport services between these areas and from them to the Nelson-Richmond urban area.

This RPTP has been prepared in conjunction with the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP). These two investment programmes are aligned in their long-term outcomes, objectives, and investment focus. It takes into account other on-going strategies such as Nelson City Council's and Tasman District Council's Active Transport and Parking Strategies, which together will deliver an overall viable travel alternative to the use of private vehicles reducing both carbon emissions and the number of vehicle kilometres travelled.

It has also recognised that the services must deliver value for money for the co-investors, continue to maintain or improve levels of service for existing users and attract new users to improve fare revenue and reduce overall transport related carbon emissions.

The RPTP achieves this by identifying public transport improvements in three yearly stages from 2024 to 2027, within Waka Kotahi guidelines, coordinating with the objectives of the draft 2024-2034 RLTP, the Nelson Future Access Project, the Richmond Programme Business Case, Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy, the wider regional strategic objectives of the two Councils Long Term Plans, and the Draft Government Policy Statement on Transport 2024 (GPS).

The focus in this programme is to consolidate the recently delivered eBus service. The feedback from the community since the new service started has been generally positive from both existing users and the broader community.

The new eBus service aligns strongly with the Land Transport Benefits Framework and Management Approach Guidelines August 2020 for impact on Mode Choice benefits (Benefits No:10.2.2 to 10.2.9) and with the first ever Emissions reduction plan (ERP) for Aotearoa New Zealand released in May 2022, which sets out actions needed across every sector of the economy to reduce emissions. Transport has a significant role to play, with a target of 41% reduction in emissions from the transport sector by 2035.

The following stages are proposed in this plan.

**Stage 1:**

- Review the eBus step change following 12 months of services that began on 1 August 2023 including analysing real time operational data and public feedback to inform potential adjustments and improvements to service reliability, frequency, and accessibility.
- Implementation of minor network adjustments identified in the 12-month review as necessary to meet budget but strike a balance between enhancement of the network including but not limited to improving reliability, meeting capacity demands, increasing geographic coverage and supporting mode shift and considering savings from poor performing services
- Review of fare policy and concession categories. This is likely to include continuation of funding support for half price public transport concessions for Community Services Card holders and half price concessions for Total Mobility services (75% discount). However, Crown funding for free fares for 5-12 year olds and half price fares for 13-24 year olds on public transport will end on 30 April 2024.
- Respond to any central government change in policy on community connect.
- Bus stop infrastructure and information/wayfinding improvements to build and improve convenience and broaden public awareness of the current services.
- Continuing improvements to the eBus website and information systems to enhance customer service levels and experience.

- Implement National Ticketing Solution to replace the Bee Card.
- Millers Acre Bus Hub.
- Bus signal priority measures.
- Additional weekend bus services on regional routes.

**Stage 2:** - Implementation will follow and be informed by the 12-month eBus review and timing will be adjusted as required. Additional routes and any route changes will be identified in the 2027-37 RTP review:

- Increased peak hour frequencies on key urban routes,
- Supporting community transport options for Golden Bay, and Hira,
- Bus priority measures, with the inclusion of any priority measures from the Nelson Future Access Project and Richmond Programme Business Case,

Maximising the benefits from investment in the frequency, service and network improvements requires a commitment to the delivery of focussed short and longer term bus priority on the road network. These will target the improvement in the reliability of the services timetable, increasing the attractiveness of public transport compared to private cars, and a visual demonstration of the priority public transport has in the overall transport network. Both the NFA and the RBC have included bus priority measures in the short-term programme priorities for investment, with priority lanes in the longer term.

Implementation of these proposals over the coming 10 years will enhance the recent eBus step change in service to ensure the service continues to provide an affordable, frequent, accessible public transport service to the key Nelson Tasman urban areas. This RTP takes into account other on-going strategies such as Nelson City Council's and Tasman District Council's Active Transport Strategies, Parking Strategies and Speed Management reviews.

## **2. Introduction**

This RPTP sets out the joint Tasman District Council (TDC) and Nelson City Council (NCC) intentions and policies regarding public transport in Nelson and Tasman for the next 10 years. It considers all relevant national and local policies, and the public transport funding from Waka Kotahi likely to be available to the two Councils.

This plan focuses on embedding the recently introduced eBus public transport service.

The Councils have taken a collaborative approach to this review to deliver an integrated public transport service. The service has been planned to coordinate with development of walking and cycling infrastructure to fully support mode shift and sustainable growth, and, in so doing, provide a regional integrated network.

The plan's primary focus is on Nelson City, and Tasman District north of Wakefield and east of Motueka. This includes the Nelson-Richmond urban area.

The plan is based on a public transport review undertaken jointly by the two councils in 2020 that sought to achieve an integrated enhanced Nelson Tasman public transport network. This has been partly implemented with the introduction of the eBus. The 2020 plan reflected input from a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties, including:

- Nelson City and Tasman District Councils (as Unitary Authorities),
- Waka Kotahi which co-funds public transport with councils,
- the bus operator SBL Group,
- Nelson Youth Council,
- Nelson 2020 Residents Survey, and
- The public through engagement using online surveys and the Shape Nelson platform.

Better public transport was one of the "big ideas from the community" as part of the development of the Te Taihu Intergenerational Strategy. Ongoing engagement with our Iwi partners will develop and confirm achieving this goal.

### **3. Purpose of the RPTP**

The Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) states that the purpose of an RPTP is to provide:

- A means of encouraging Council and public transport operators to work together in developing public transport services and infrastructure; and
- An instrument for engaging with the public on the design and operation of the public transport network; and
- A statement of:
  - The public transport services that are integral to the public transport network;
  - The policies and procedures that apply to those services; and
  - The information and infrastructure that support those services.

This RPTP has been prepared in accordance with the LTMA requirements.

### **4. Unit to Which the RPTP Applies**

For the purposes of the LTMA the combined NCC and TDC administrative boundaries define the geographic area ("unit") to which this Regional Public Transport Plan applies.

### **5. Objectives**

This Regional Public Transport Programme is based on a customer focused approach to provide a regional integrated network which:

- Provides frequent, attractive, economic, and viable transport choices for most sectors of the community;
- Reduces the reliance on private cars;
- Is sustainable and reduces carbon emissions.

## 6. Strategic Alignment

This RPTP has been prepared to align with national and regional direction for public transport together with local strategies, policies and plans, as shown in Table 1 below.

This RPTP also takes into account other strategies and policies such as the NCC's and TDC's Future Development Strategy, Active Transport Strategies, Parking Strategies and Speed Management reviews.

**Table 6.1: Strategic alignment with other documents**

Document	Relevance
Land Transport Management Act 2003	Part 5 sets out the statutory provisions relating to the regulation and management of public Transport in NZ. This RPTP aligns with these requirements.
Draft Government Policy Statement on Transport 2024 (GPS)	Identifies the Government priorities for land transport and funding allocations for next 10 years. The draft GPS notes that effective public transport provides commuters with more choice and helps to reduce travel times, congestion, and emissions, however the draft GPS also signals that increased public transport fare-box recovery and third-party revenue will be expected from local government.
Climate Commission Report 2021	This RPTP aligns with the draft Climate Change Commissions recommendation to increase public transport patronage by 120% by 2030.
Land Transport Benefits Framework August 2020	This document provides a framework to assess the Benefits and Measures of projects to achieve the GPS targets. This RPTP is aligned with measures 10.2.2 to 10.2.9.
Te hau mārohi ki anamata, Emissions Reduction Plan 2022	Identifies actions in relation to transport emissions. This RPTP and the recent eBus step change aligns with two of the key transport actions:  `Improving the reach, frequency and quality of public transport and making it more affordable for low-income New Zealanders`  `Requiring only zero-emissions public transport buses to be purchased by 2025`.
Draft Nelson Tasman Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2034	This RPTP is an important part of the delivery of both the short and longer term goals, objectives and desired outcomes of the Draft Nelson Tasman RLTP. Public transport is a cornerstone element in achieving the sustainable transport vision for the region through improving access, transport choices, supporting and integrating with active options, improving



Document	Relevance
	health, wellbeing and urban amenity whilst contributing to reducing carbon emissions.
Nelson City Council LTP 2024-2034	The Nelson LTP outlines the projects and services that are planned for a ten-year period, including those from the Transportation Activity Management Plan. These projects include the operation and ongoing development of a regional public transport service.
Tasman District Council LTP 2024-2034	The Tasman LTP outlines the projects and services that are planned for a ten-year period, including those from the Transportation Activity Management Plan. These projects include the operation and ongoing development of a regional public transport service.
Tasman Resource Management Plan	The TRMP is the principal document that determines where commercial and residential growth will occur within the Tasman region, which in turn influences future demand for public transport services.
Nelson Plan	The Draft Whakamahere Whakatū Nelson Plan is a resource management plan for managing how Nelson grows and develops, and for protecting our natural environment. This RPTP supports the sustainable transport aspects of the draft plan.
TDC Transport Activity Management Plan (AMP)	The TDC Transport AMP is the key document that lays out changes to the transport activities in the region, including active and public transport.
NCC Transport Activity Management Plan (AMP)	The NCC Transport AMP provides the strategic investment activities for the next 10 years. Public transport is a key part of this framework for investment.
Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy (FDS)	The Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy outlines a long-term picture of future urban growth in the region over the next 30 years. This RPTP aligns with the FDS by taking into account urban growth, both greenfield and intensification, in the operation and development of our Public Transport network.
Richmond Business Case (RBC)	The RBC seeks to provide a sustainable and liveable urban environment and optimise the transport system within the Richmond area and includes PT priority measures. The RPTP includes PT operations and improvements in Richmond and

Document	Relevance
	regional Tasman which support the RBC programme of investment.
Nelson Future Access Project (NFA)	The Nelson Future Access Project outlines a 30-year investment plan for the central Nelson transport network. Central to this plan is the operation of a public transport service that will in time use priority lanes both on SH6 through Tahunanui and on Waimea Road.
Richmond Network Operating Framework (NOF)	The Richmond NOF is a framework that seeks to plan for an integrated transport network that provides access to all mode users. This RPTP aligns closely with the Richmond NOF by planning to achieve the NOF's strategic objective for public transport
Nelson Network Operating Framework (NOF)	The Nelson NOF provides the transport framework for the areas of Nelson not included in the NFA.
Richmond and Motueka town centre parking strategy 2018 – 2038	This document sets out Council's approach to managing town centre parking for cars and other vehicles in Motueka and Richmond.
Nelson Parking Strategy	The Nelson Parking Strategy outlines a high-level plan for the management of parking in the Nelson city
Zero Carbon Act	Recognises PT must respond to the environmental priorities set by government

## 7. Current Services

### 7.1 Context

Public transport services have operated in the Nelson-Richmond urban area since 1927. The public bus network dates from 1998, when four local routes (to Atawhai, The Brook, Toi Toi/Hospital, and Washington Valley) were introduced to Nelson along with the Late Late Bus. The network expanded to include the two major and previously commercially operated Nelson-Richmond routes when a new contract was introduced in 2012. Services gradually evolved to include a Stoke loop service, which was introduced in 2015 but withdrawn and replaced with three off-peak only local routes in 2017; as well as a pair of local Richmond routes, which were introduced on 3 August 2020; as well as other minor changes.

A significant step change was achieved on 1 August 2023 with the introduction of the new eBus service.

### 7.2 Service Goals

The RPTP 2021-2031 set out clear goals for the new eBus network (described in that plan as Stage 1). The specific goals that made up that step change were almost all successfully achieved upon the launch. Table 7.1 below summarises the current status of those step changes three months on.

*Table 7.1 Current Status of the RPTP 2021-2031 Stage 1 Step Changes*

<b>Step Changes Achieved as at 1 August 2023</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new simplified urban route network, which will operate seven days a week with improved service levels;</li> <li>• All day 30-minute frequencies on all urban routes, 7 days;</li> <li>• A new demand responsive service to replace the current loop routes in Stoke;</li> <li>• New weekday regional commuter services from Motueka and Wakefield to Richmond (and onwards to Nelson as express services);</li> <li>• New low emission buses;</li> <li>• A new fare structure based around a single urban fare zone;</li> <li>• Information improvements;</li> <li>• New branding;</li> <li>• Rights for advertising on the buses to be retained by Council (This may need a Council policy.); and</li> <li>• The services are delivered by a dedicated single regional staff member who will manage the contract procurement and operation, reporting to the two Councils jointly.</li> </ul>
<b>Step Changes remaining progress as at 1 August 2023</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New high-quality super stops at Richmond, Stoke, Tahunanui, Hospital and Nelson;</li> <li>• Continued bus stop improvements elsewhere in the network; and</li> <li>• Supporting community transport options in Tasman (Wakefield, Tapawera, Mapua, Motueka and Golden Bay) and Hira.</li> </ul>
<b>Step Changes carried through to this RPTP 2024-2027</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting community transport options in Tasman (Wakefield, Tapawera, Mapua, Motueka and Golden Bay) and Hira;</li> <li>• New high-quality super stops at Richmond, Stoke, Tahunanui, Hospital and Nelson;</li> <li>• Continued bus stop improvements elsewhere in the network.</li> </ul>

The step change has successfully created a public transport network that has:

- Introduced 17 electric vehicles to the network in partnership with the bus services contractor SBL Group Limited and removed 9 diesel buses from the regional public transport network (three diesel buses remain, two on the long distance Motueka and Wakefield routes and one on the On demand route);
- Introduced an On demand ride sharing bus service to the Stoke area and a customised App for booking management; Poor patronage on this service has resulted in termination in May 2024
- Stimulated bus stop infrastructure improvements including the installation of electronic timetables providing accessible real time information at 8 key stops in the region and an upgraded Nelson City Centre Interchange at 27 Bridge Street;
- Improved customer information systems with the creation of a dedicated mobile friendly eBus website and the provision of real time bus tracking data for website customers;
- Provided integration with other transit systems including Google maps; and
- Successfully rebranded the regional public transport services as eBus.

### **7.3 Current Routes**

The eBus network consists of 7 fixed route services, and the Late Late Bus. The eBus network schematic is shown below in Figure 7.1

The eBus network provides consistent services levels across the 4 main urban routes with services on each route operating in both directions every 30 minutes, 7 days per week. The routes, frequency and hours of operation are described in more detail at Table 7.2. The only route that has been carried over from the previous network is the Late Late Bus service.

Figure 7.1 eBus Network Schematic

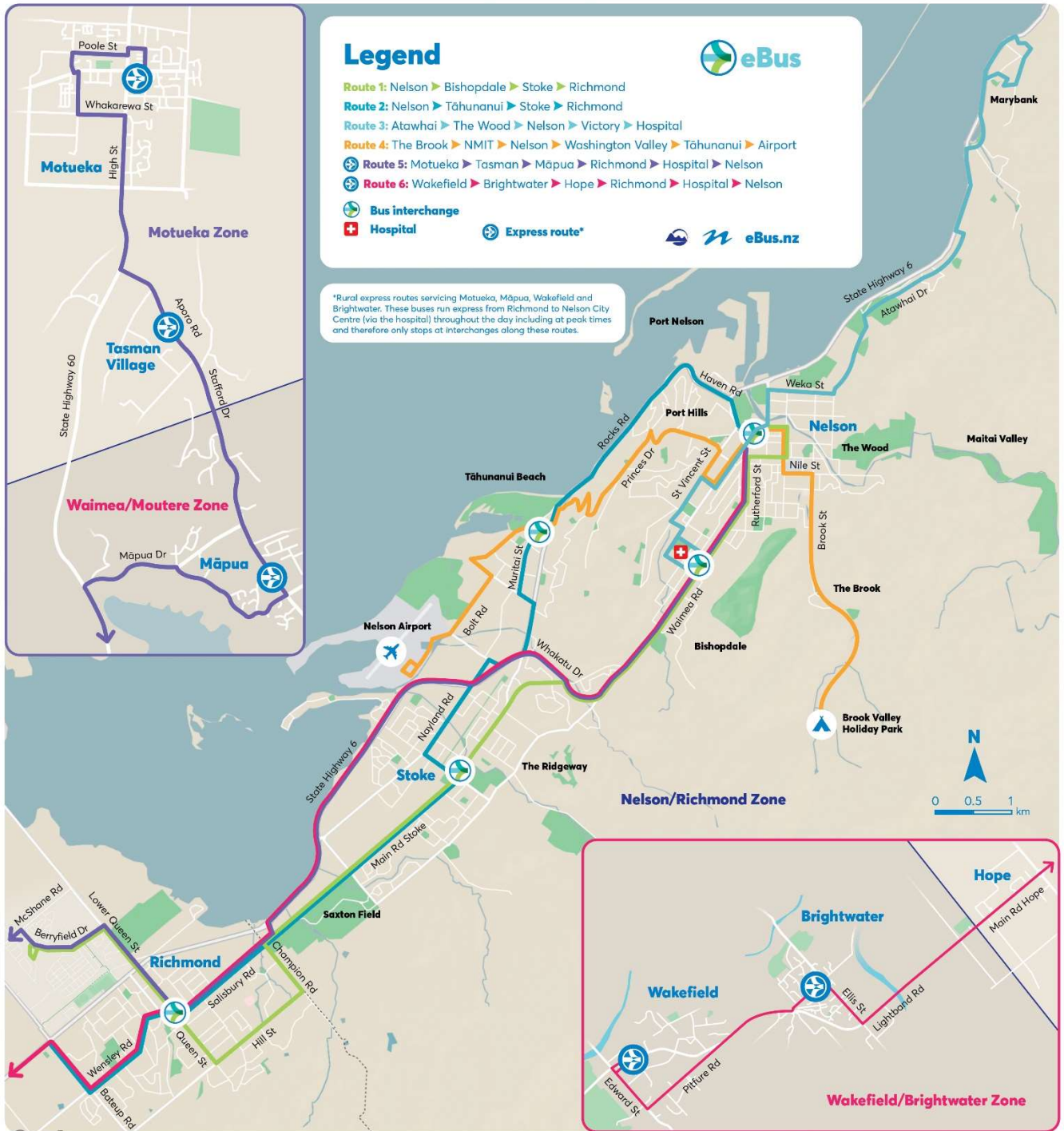


Table 7.2 Summary of Current eBus Routes Frequency and Hours of Operation

eBus Route	Route Name	Route Description	Monday - Friday	Weekend Days	Public Holidays	School Holidays
Route 1	Richmond - Nelson via Waimea Road	Berryfield Drive, Richmond to Nelson city centre via Queen Street, Hill Street, Main Road Stoke, Waimea Road and return	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:07am from Richmond and at 7:25am from Nelson	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:07am from Richmond and at 07:25am from Nelson	Public holidays excluding Christmas Day and Good Friday. Every 60 minutes departing at 7:33am from Richmond and at 7:25 am from Nelson	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:07am from Richmond and at 07:25am from Nelson
Route 2	Richmond - Nelson via Rocks Road	Bateup Road, Richmond to Nelson city centre to via Wensley Road, Salisbury Road, Main Road Stoke, Nayland Road, Tahunanui Drive, Rocks Road and return	Every 30 minutes departing at 6:55am from Richmond and at 7:40am from Nelson	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:22am from Richmond and at 7:40am from Nelson	Public holidays excluding Christmas Day and Good Friday. Every 60 minutes departing at 7:16am from Richmond and at 8:10am from Nelson	Every 30 minutes departing at 6:55am from Richmond and at 7:40am from Nelson
Route 3	Atawhai - Hospital	Tresillian Avenue, Atawhai Drive, Weka Street, Trafalgar Street, Nelson city centre, Victory Square, Toi Toi, Hospital and return	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:20 am from Atawhai and at 7:16am from Hospital (Franklyn Street)	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:20 am from Atawhai and at 7:16am from Hospital (Franklyn Street)	Public holidays excluding Christmas Day and Good Friday. Every 60 minutes departing at 7:20am from Atawhai and at 7:46am from Hospital (Franklyn Street)	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:20 am from Atawhai and at 7:16am from Hospital (Franklyn Street)
Route 4	The Brook - Airport	Brook Street, Collingwood Street, Nelson city centre, Washington Valley, Moana Avenue, Tahunanui interchange, Golf Road, Airport terminal and return	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:10am from Brook Valley Holiday Park and at 7:19 from Nelson Airport	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:10am from Brook Valley Holiday Park and at 7:22 from Nelson Airport	Public holidays excluding Christmas Day and Good Friday. Every 60 minutes departing at 7:10am from Brook Valley Holiday Park and at 7:52 from Nelson Airport	Every 30 minutes departing at 7:10am from Brook Valley Holiday Park and at 7:19 from Nelson Airport

eBus Route	Route Name	Route Description	Monday - Friday	Weekend Days	Public Holidays	School Holidays
Route 5	Motueka - Nelson	Motueka, Tasman Village, Mapua, Richmond, Hospital, Nelson city centre and return. Express between Richmond and Nelson city centre.	Four times per day in each direction departing Motueka at 6:53 am and Nelson at 8:27am	No services	No services	Monday to Friday only. Four times per day in each direction departing Motueka at 6:53 am and Nelson at 8:27am
Route 6	Wakefield - Nelson	Wakefield, Brightwater, Hope, Richmond, Hospital and Nelson city centre	Six times per day in each direction departing Wakefield at 7:04 am and Nelson at 7:58am	No services	No services	Monday to Friday only. Six times per day in each direction departing Wakefield at 7:04 am and Nelson at 7:58am
Route 7	Peak Overflow Richmond - Nelson via Waimea Road	Richmond Interchange to Nelson city centre via Queen Street, Hill Street, Main Road Stoke, Waimea Road and return	Once a day in each direction departing Richmond at 8:01 am and Rutherford Street at 3:15pm	No services	No services	No services
Route 8	Late Late Bus	Nelson city centre to Richmond Interchange via Tahunanui and Main Road Stoke	Friday and Saturday nights hourly departing Nelson at 10pm to 3:15am and Richmond at 10:30pm to 3:35am	Friday and Saturday nights hourly departing Nelson at 10pm to 3:15am and Richmond at 10:30pm to 3:35am	No services	Friday and Saturday nights hourly departing Nelson at 10pm to 3:15am and Richmond at 10:30pm to 3:35am

**Route 1** operates between 7:07 am and 7:51pm at 30-minute frequencies in each direction, 7 days per week.

The service travels between Nelson City Interchange at 27 Bridge Street, Nelson and Central Park, Berryfield Drive, Richmond. In the Tasman region it incorporates the section of Lower Queen Street previously part of the NBus Richmond Loop 8W.

The inclusion of Hill Street in the east and Berryfield Drive in the west has improved PT access for residents living each of these growing residential areas compared with the old service.

Figure 7.2: Map of Route 1 Richmond – Nelson via Waimea Road

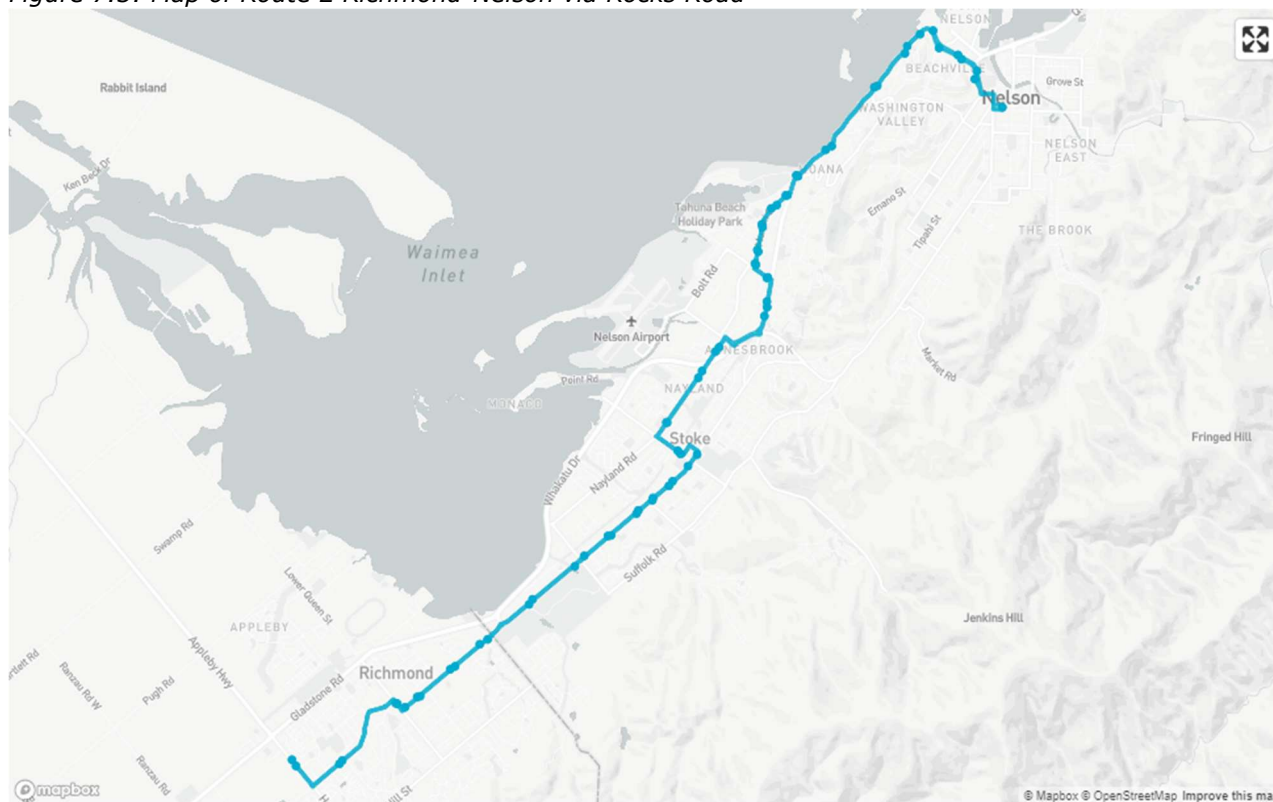




**Route 2** operates between 6:55 am and 7:46pm at 30-minute frequencies in each direction, 7 days per week.

The service travels between Nelson City Interchange at 27 Bridge Street, Nelson and Bateup Road, Richmond. In the Tasman region it has incorporated Bateup Road and Wensley Road which were previously served by NBus Richmond Loop route 8W. In Nelson, it includes Nayland Road which was previously served by NBus Stoke Loop route 7A providing better connectivity between Richmond, Stoke and Tahunanui as well as better access to schools and employment in the Annesbrook area.

Figure 7.3: Map of Route 2 Richmond-Nelson via Rocks Road

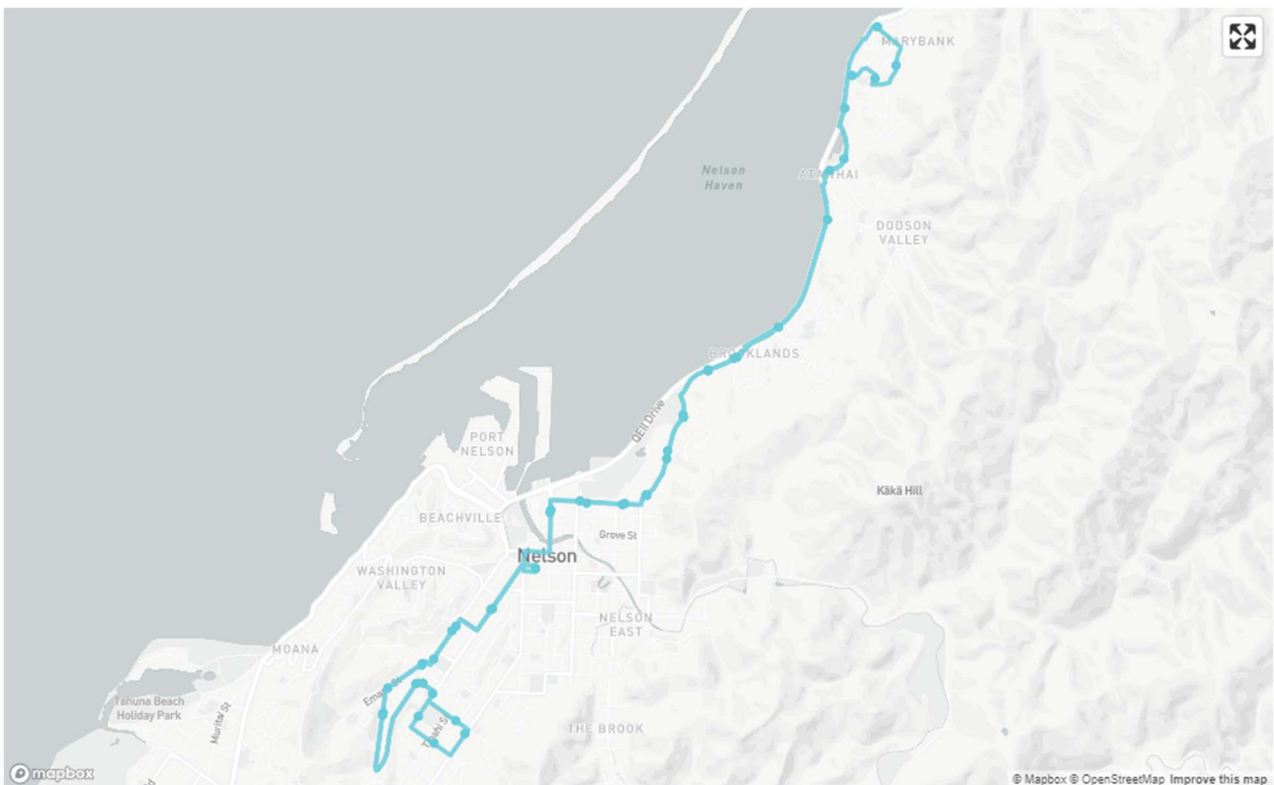


**Route 3** Atawhai – Hospital operates between 7:16am and 7:24 pm at 30-minute frequencies in each direction, 7 days per week.

The service travels between Tresillian Avenue, Atawhai and Nelson Hospital, Franklyn Street. Serving only the Nelson region it incorporates sections of the previous NBus routes 3 and 5 to create a north – south Nelson route improving access to schools and the hospital from the north.

At this stage some amendments to the route in the Toi Toi area have been necessitated due to the significant degradation of the road surface. Investigations showed that the road surface in the area could not be easily fixed to allow multiple buses a day to travel over the area therefore the route will be varied to incorporate Toi Toi Street in substitution.

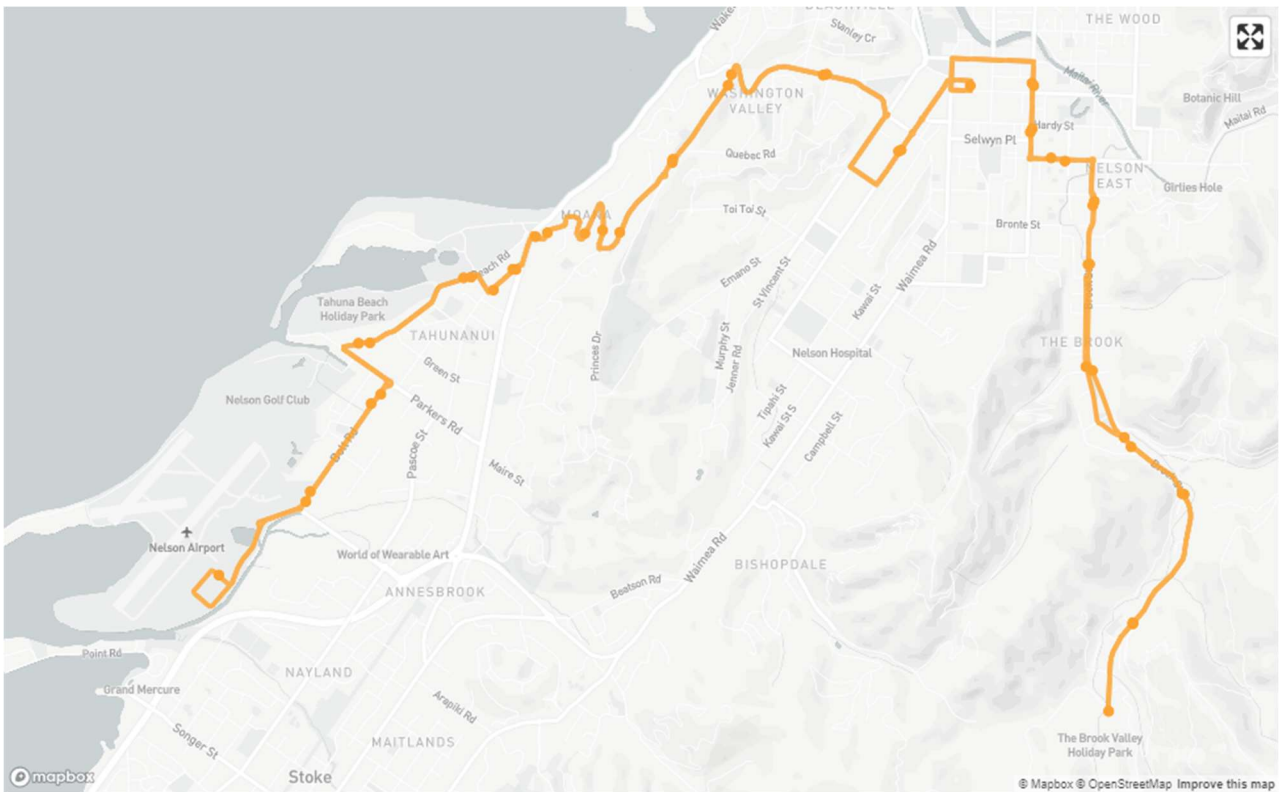
Figure 7.4: Map of Route 3 Atawhai - Hospital



**Route 4** the Brook – Airport operates between 7:10am and 6:58 pm at 30-minute frequencies in each direction, 7 days per week.

The service travels between the Brook Valley Holiday Park and the Nelson airport terminal. Serving only the Nelson region it incorporates sections of the previous NBus routes 4 and 6 to create an east - west Nelson route providing access to a range of destinations across the wider city including NMIT, Brook Valley conservation and recreation areas and an airport link to the central city. It has improved access to Washington Valley and surrounding areas improved connectivity with Tahunanui and employment in the Annesbrook area.

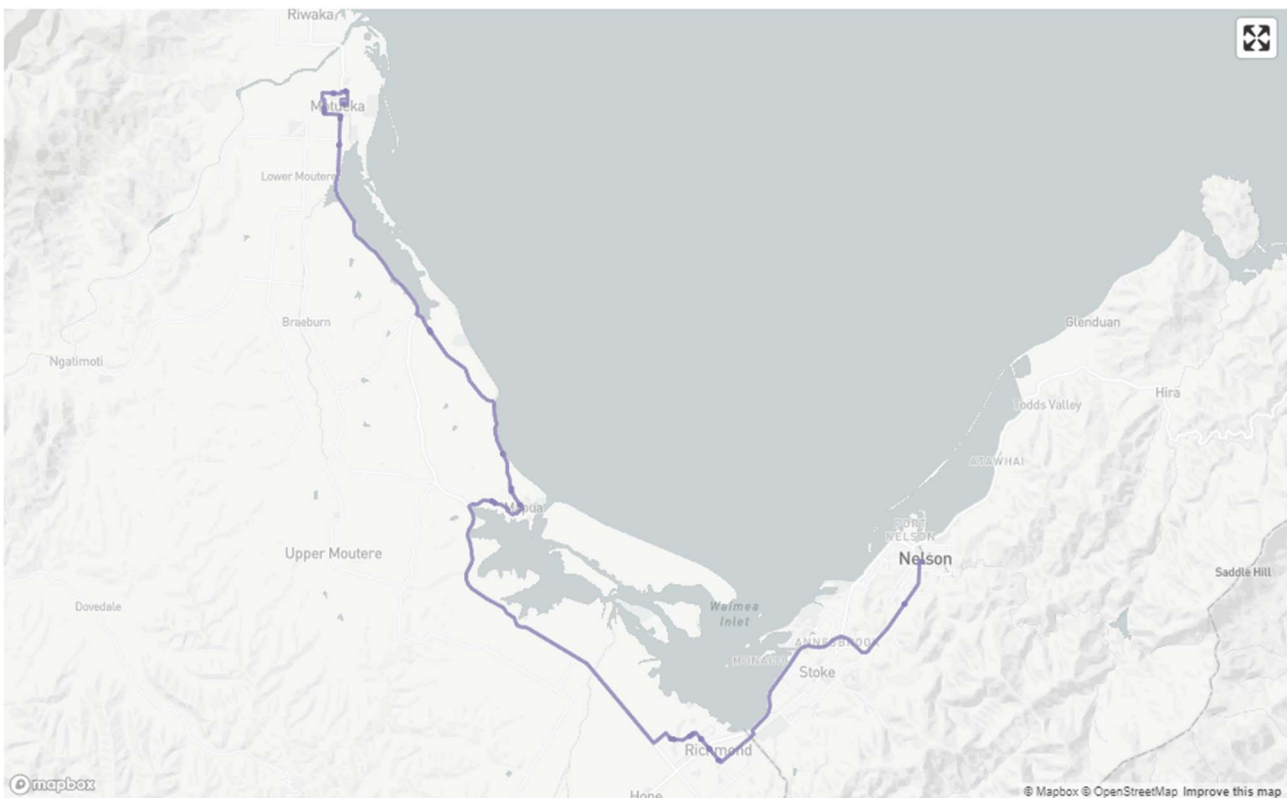
Figure 7.5: Map of Route 4 The Brook – Airport



**Route 5** Motueka – Nelson operates between 6:53am and 6:40 pm, 4 times per day in each direction, Monday to Friday only. The is a regional commuter and express service linking Motueka, Tasman Village, Mapua, Richmond (including Richmond west at Berryfield Drive, with the Hospital and Nelson City Centre. Between Richmond Interchange and Nelson Interchange it is an express service via Wakatu Drive stopping only at the Hospital Interchange.

The limited stop express pattern reduces regional passengers’ travel time and provides an express alternative for urban area passengers at the key nodes at Richmond Interchange, Hospital Interchange and Nelson City Centre Interchange.

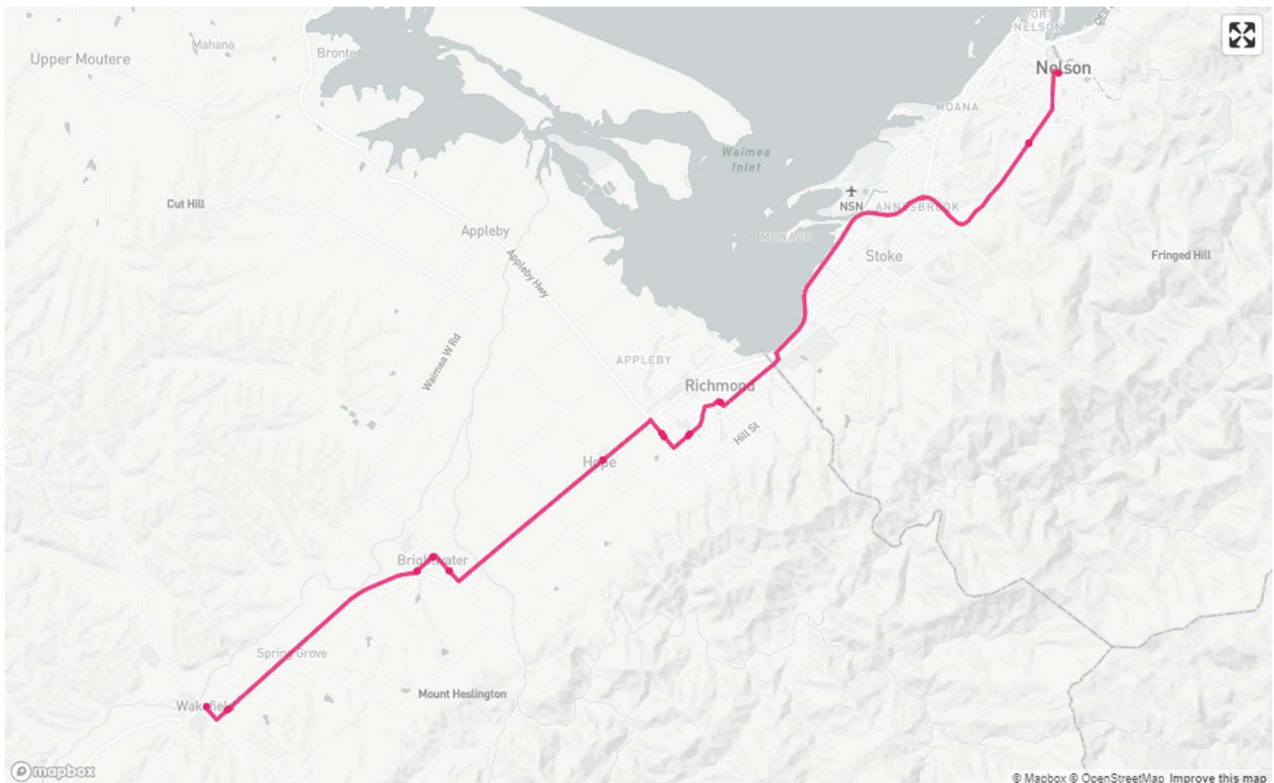
Figure 7.6: Map of Route 5 Motueka – Nelson



**Route 6** Wakefield - Nelson operates between 7:04am and 6:10 pm, 6 times per day in each direction, Monday to Friday only. This is a regional commuter and express service linking Wakefield, Brightwater, Hope, Richmond (including Richmond south at Bateup Road, with the Hospital and Nelson City Centre. Between Richmond Interchange and Nelson Interchange it is an express service via Wakatu Drive stopping only at the Hospital Interchange.

As with route 5, the limited stop express pattern reduces regional passengers' travel time and provides an express alternative for urban area passengers at the key nodes at Richmond Interchange, Hospital Interchange and Nelson City Centre Interchange.

Figure 7.7: Map of Route 6 Wakefield – Nelson



**Route 7** Peak Overflow provides a single overflow trip once per day in each direction, Monday to Friday only during school terms.

The service travels from Richmond Interchange at 8:01 towards Nelson City following the same route as the Route 1 service and returns from Rutherford Street near Nelson College for Girls at 3:15pm. The service provides extra capacity at peak commuting times to allow for higher levels of patronage, particularly for secondary school students travelling to and from Richmond and the Nelson colleges.

Figure 7.8: Map of route 7 Peak Overflow





**The Late Late Bus** is the only fixed route service that has been carried over from the NBus network. It is a late-night weekend only route that follows a one-way loop between central Richmond and central Nelson via Main Road Stoke, Waimea Road, (northward) and Tahunanui, Annesbrook and Main Road Stoke (southward). It operates between 10:00pm and 4:00am on Friday and Saturday nights only, at a 30-minute frequency.

Figure 7.9: Map of the Late Late Bus



**Community Transport** - Volunteer-run and community-supported community transport offers an effective means of providing basic access in regional areas, and Nelson Tasman Community Transport Trust has been operating since 2018 which initially serviced Wakefield and Motueka. With the introduction of the eBus, community services have altered to meet the weekend demand, provide services to the Moutere along with a volunteer drivers' transport service in Mapua. Trials are underway for a Wakefield to Tapawera connection. Some support is provided to these services through council grants or a small amount of transport system investment which has included Waka Kotahi funding. Stage 2 includes community transport support for Hira.

A trial of subsidised trips for local residents for trips between Motueka and Takaka on Golden Bay Coachlines was undertaken in 2023. As a result of this trial, it was agreed to continue to subsidise local trips until July 2024.

Supporting community transport such as Nelson Tasman Community Transport Trust and offering reduced rates on Golden Bay Coachlines are integral to our public transport service in order to service our rural communities.

## **7.4 Fare Structure**

The current electronic payment system, the Bee Card, was introduced to the Nelson and Tasman regions on 3 August 2020, in conjunction as the urban bus routes to Richmond.

The Bee Card is a tag-on tag-off prepay travel card that can be used on public transport systems in many regions around New Zealand, including the Nelson-Tasman network. It provides a means of payment and improved data reporting capability. Bee Card users receive discounted fares and national concessions are applied via the Bee Card system.

From 1 August 2023 a new fare zone and tariff structure was introduced to the Nelson-Tasman region. This structure further simplified regional public transport fares with the creation of the single Nelson and Richmond urban fare zone and two regional zones with a flat fare structure within each zone.

The single urban zone is separated from the Moutere Waimea zone by White Road and Swamp Road; and the Motueka Zone is separated from that at Stafford Drive Ruby Bay from Pine Hill Drive north. An illustration of the new fare zones is shown in figure 7.11.



Figure 7.11 Illustration of Public Transport Fare Zones from 1 August 2023



The single urban fare zone was introduced to drive patronage growth and to make public transport more cost effective for longer urban journeys. The intention is for public transport to compete with private cars, reduce congestion and support mode shift.

At the same time that the simplified public transport fares were introduced, the Nelson Tasman region implemented additional concessions funded by Waka Kotahi under an extension of the Community Connect scheme. The extended scheme introduced free travel for children aged under 12 years and new concession categories for youths aged 13-18 inclusive and for young people aged 19-14 inclusive. The application of these concessions reduced the fares for children and young people beyond the level proposed by the Public Transport Fares and Pricing Policy which was due to come into effect from 1 July 2023.

The new Government has signalled the continuation of funding support for half price public transport concessions for Community Services Card holders and half price concessions for Total Mobility services (75% discount). However, Crown funding for free fares for 5-12 year olds and half price fares for 13-24 year olds on public transport ended on 30 April 2024.

The simplified fare zone and tariff structure is outlined below in figure 7.12.

Figure 7.12 Simplified fare zone and tariff structure as at 30 May 2024<sup>1</sup>.

<b>Cash</b>			
Travelling within	1 Zone	2 Zones	3 Zones
Adult	\$3.00	\$6.00	\$9.00
Infant under 5	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Child 5 – 12*	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Youth 13 – 18*	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$4.00
Cash concession	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$4.00

<b>Bee Card</b>			
Travelling within	1 Zone	2 Zones	3 Zones
Adult	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$6.00
Infant under 5	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Child 5 – 12*	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Youth 13 – 18*	\$0.50	\$1.00	\$1.50
Youth Plus 19 – 24	\$1.00	\$2.00	\$3.00
Community Connect Card	\$1.00	\$2.00	\$3.00
SuperGold Card**	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

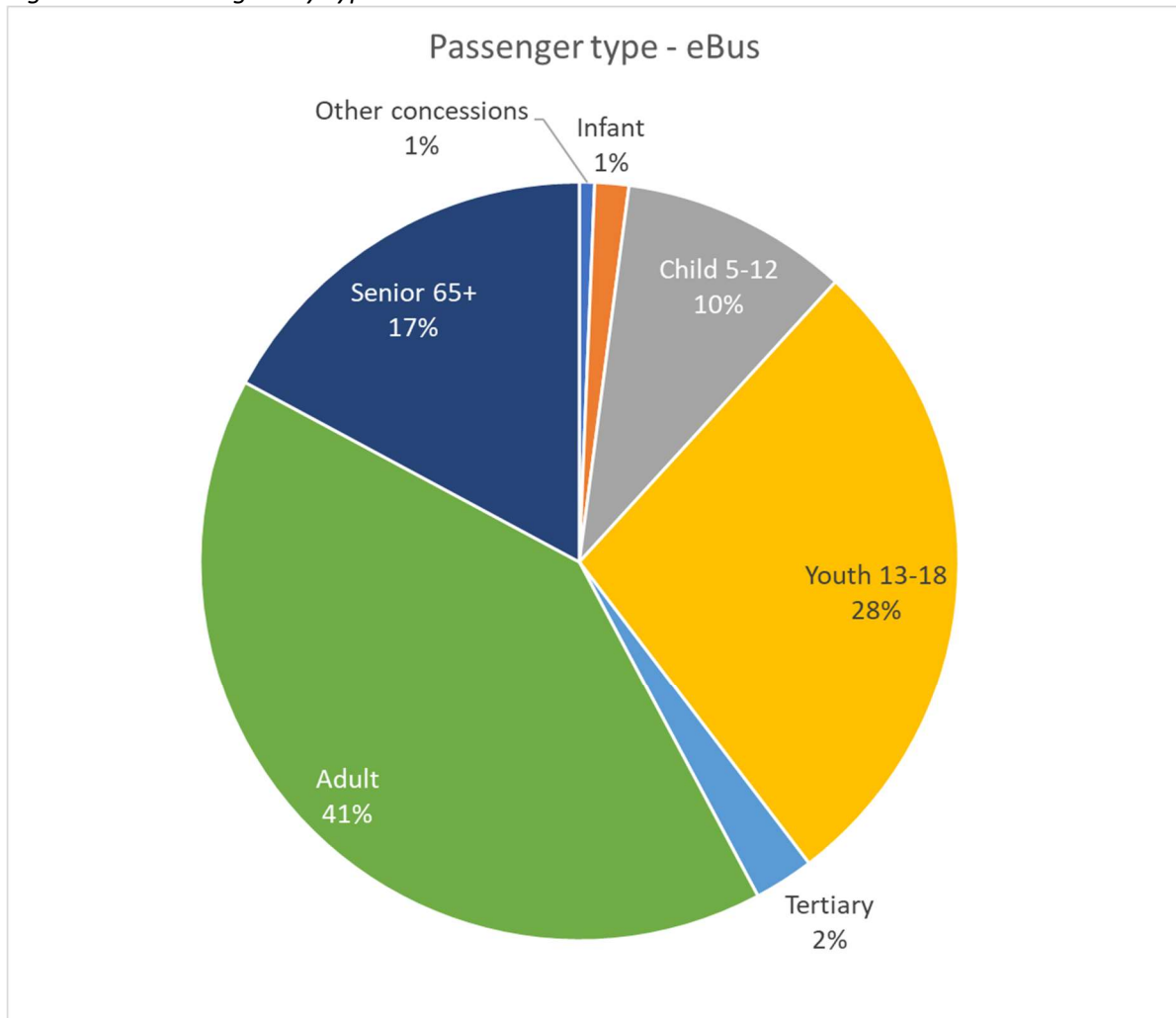
<sup>1</sup> Bee Card Fees to include a 5% increase at 1 July 2024 and inflation changes as reflected in Public Transport Contract Indices (allowing for rounding) in the future.

## 7.5 Customer Journeys

### 7.5.1 Customer Profile

The eBus network has a customer base that is typical of provincial centres and suburban areas in the larger centres. Figure 7.13 shows that adult and concession fare users account for 41% and 42% of current customers respectively, with the balance being primarily seniors with a SuperGold Card. The largest concession group is the Youth 13-18 year old category. This concession group has benefited from increased funding under the Community Connect scheme.

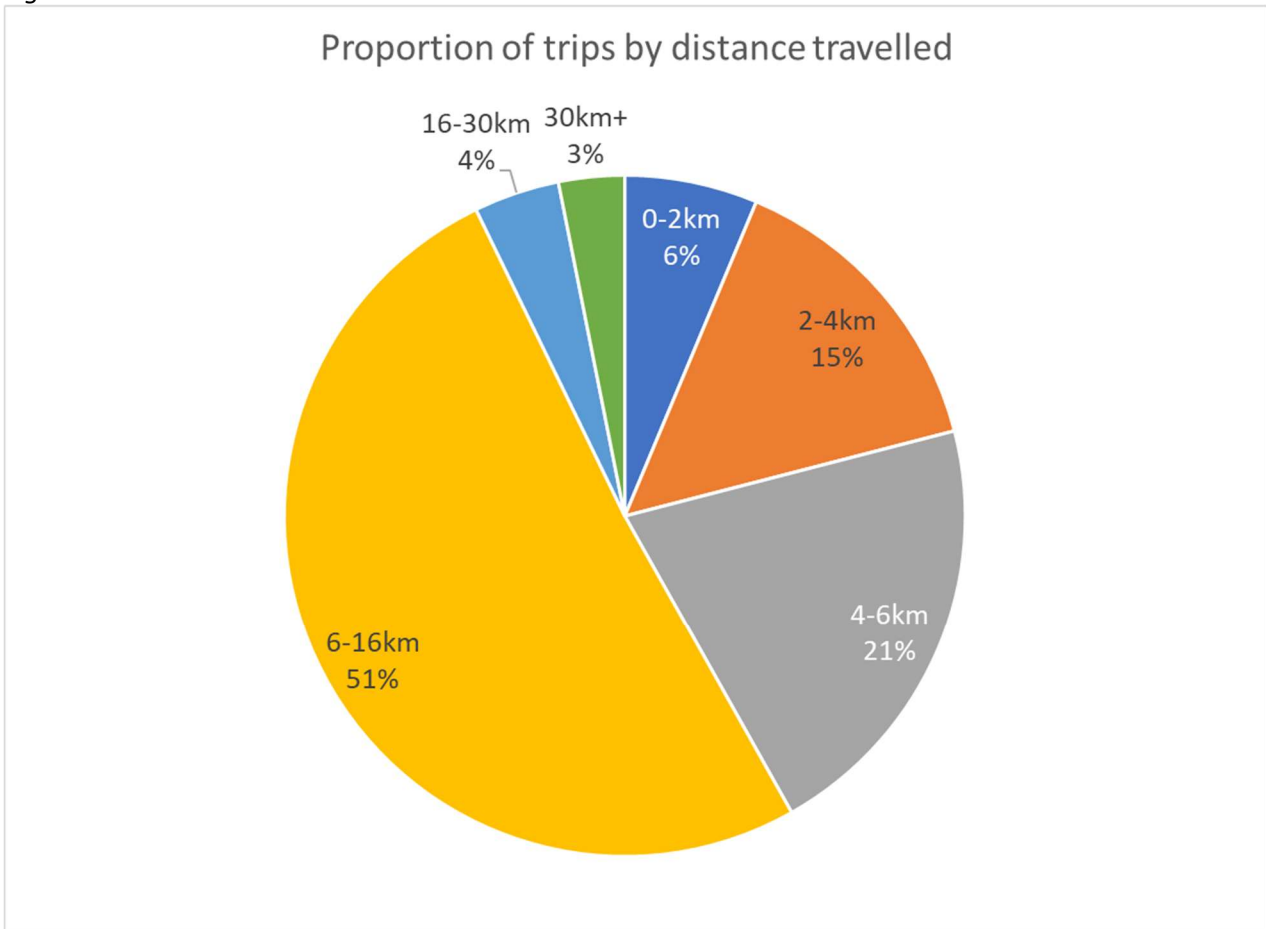
Figure 7.13 Passengers by type



### 7.5.2 Journey Distances

Figure 7.14 shows the typical distance travelled by customers using the eBus services and shows that 58% of customers using the network travelled longer trips of over 6km. This suggests that the network is predominantly used for longer journeys to destinations that fall outside of a reasonable journey by active modes, such as walking or cycling, and highlights that the current network can support mode shift away from private vehicle use.

Figure 7.14: Distance Travelled



## 7.6 Institutional Framework

The current bus network is branded as eBus. Services are operated by SBL Group Limited under contract to NCC and TDC jointly, through a single unit gross contract which commenced on 1 August 2023 for a term of nine years.

Each unitary authority provides financial assistance towards costs of the services and infrastructure that are not otherwise funded via ticket revenue and Waka Kotahi financial assistance.

Financial services that cross the regional boundary are allocated between the authorities by route length. The ticket revenue is divided between the regions on the same basis. Each authority is responsible for the provision and maintenance of public transport infrastructure within its area.

The current services are provided under a Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) which aims to increase patronage with less reliance on subsidy whilst growing both:

- The commerciality of public transport services and incentives for public transport services to become fully commercial; and
- The confidence that public transport services are priced efficiently and there is access to public transport markets for competitors.

## **7.7 Accessibility of Public Transport**

### **7.7.1 Total Mobility Scheme**

All of the eBus fleet are wheelchair accessible. However, there are some customers with disabilities that are either unable to physically access the bus network or can only use them at some times during the day. NCC currently provides administration support and funding for the Total Mobility Scheme in Nelson and Tasman. In the past this scheme provides transport assistance to people with disabilities through the provision of half-priced taxi fares. Nelson/Tasman had a capped fare of \$30. With the Community Connect subsidy applied (which increased Waka Kotahi contribution) the current discount rate for Nelson-Tasman is 75% to a maximum discount of \$22.50 per trip.). Total Mobility operates in Nelson, Richmond and Motueka, with about 2,868 people using the scheme.

Approximately 43,924 trips are made annually through the scheme in Nelson and Tasman. The annual operational cost of this service is approximately \$587,000. Waka Kotahi meets 60% of this cost<sup>[1]</sup>; NCC meets its share of the costs incurred in Nelson, and TDC meets the costs incurred in Tasman district.

The scheme also provides taxi-vans capable of carrying people in wheelchairs and provides for an extra \$10 subsidy per trip for the use of these taxi-vans in recognition of the costs and time involved in carrying passengers using a wheelchair. This cost, approximately \$18,000pa is fully met by Waka Kotahi. Assistance with the costs of installing the necessary equipment into the vans to enable them to carry wheelchairs and electric chairs is 60% reimbursed by Waka Kotahi and 40% by the operator but subsidy must be applied for through Council as the approved organisation.

NCC administers the scheme, using an electronic ID card system (known as RIDEWISE). NCC administers payments to the service providers including taxi companies through this system.

Because Total Mobility is a nation-wide scheme, there are certain rules aimed at ensuring consistency between the places where the scheme operates and about how the scheme is run. Councils will continue to comply with these rules and thus ensure Nelson and Tasman members of the scheme can use the scheme elsewhere in NZ.

The Regional Transport Committee has approved supplementing the Total Mobility scheme with a new accessibility concession that will enable Total Mobility card holders to utilise the eBus network with the support of a caregiver. Caregivers travel free to enable customers with disabilities the option of utilising bus services. This concession is operational from 1 May 2024.

## **7.8 Regional Transport Priorities and Planning Context**

There are several regional plans that outline the integration of PT into the overall planning for the Nelson Tasman region. They recognise the role PT has to play in the delivery of the overall transport system, how it contributes to ensuring our changing demographics have access to all services and places, how economic activity can be supported by improved PT, and how growth can be supported by good PT planning and delivery.

The investment programme identified in this RPTP has been closely aligned to contribute towards achieving the targets and objectives set in the regional plans and is discussed in later sections of this document.

The objectives have a strong sustainability emphasis, which is consistent with the RLTP objectives. The RPTP specific objectives identified in Section 5 provide clear justification for

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<sup>[1]</sup> The Waka Kotahi subsidy rate is 60%, but it also provides an additional \$10 payment for each wheelchair trip.

investment in improvements to coverage and service levels, and to other improvements that will increase its competitiveness with private vehicles, such as bus priority, or make it generally more attractive and easier to use as a transport option.

### **7.8.1 Regional Land Transport Plans (RLTP)**

Nelson and Tasman RLTPs are jointly developed by NCC and TDC to provide a coordinated transport planning approach for Nelson Tasman region.

The RLTP for the period 2024-2031 sets out objectives that are consistent with the Government Policy Statement. Public transport is directly related to all the following RLTP objectives: mode choice, safety, network management, resilience and environmental outcomes.

### **7.8.2 Nelson Tasman Future Development Strategy**

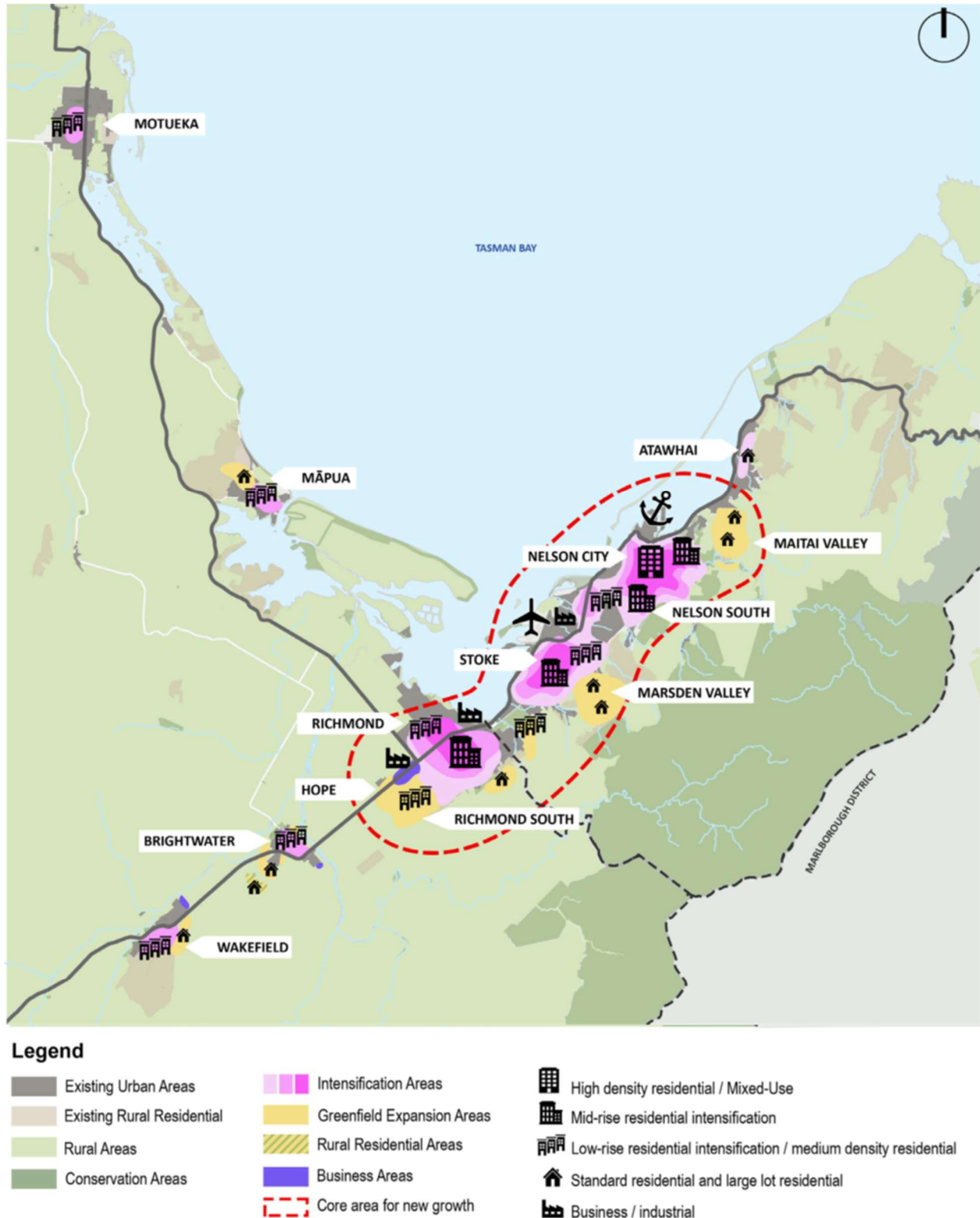
The [Nelson-Tasman Future Development Strategy](#) (FDS) supports intensification of current urban settlements, especially Nelson, Stoke, Richmond and Motueka. However, this is unlikely to provide sufficient housing capacity or housing choices. Therefore, some greenfield development will also be needed, while minimising the use of high-quality rural land wherever possible.

The FDS outlines a strategy of consolidated growth focused largely along State Highway 6. This includes:

- Prioritising intensification of housing development in Nelson, Richmond, Brightwater, Wakefield, Māpua and Motueka.
- Providing for managed greenfield expansion around Nelson, Richmond, Brightwater, Wakefield and Māpua.
- Providing for some managed greenfield expansion around the rural towns of Murchison, Tapawera, St Arnaud and in Golden Bay.
- Providing for commercial and residential growth within existing centres and mixed use areas that will have a combination of residential and commercial activities.
- Providing opportunities for business (light industrial and commercial) growth in Richmond, Brightwater and Wakefield and within the rural towns of Murchison, Tapawera and Tākaka where it is needed to meet local demand.

The strategy provides capacity for about 25,000 houses over the next 30 years in the combined urban environment, which will be enough to meet demand under a medium or high growth scenario. It anticipates about 47% of growth via intensification, 29% via managed greenfield expansion, 2% via rural residential and 22% via zoned but undeveloped capacity in existing greenfield and rural residential areas. This means that 70% of growth will be accommodated within the existing urban limits.

Figure 7.15: Growth Pattern Anticipated by the FDS



Many of the growth areas in the FDS have been identified as areas where PT will have a significant role to play in catering to the transport demand generated by population growth, particularly in the Nelson-Richmond urban area. With respect to public transport, the FDS consequently identifies specific actions to:

- promote intensification in a way that supports public transport and active modes,



- develop a transport system that is supportive of intensification, such as a public transport spine,
- support more frequent and efficient public transport services, and
- invest in transport projects that help to lead urban growth, such as proactive development of public transport.

The FDS complements the RLTP and RPTP by supporting investment in public transport improvements, particularly to coverage and service levels, to enable the public transport network to take on an increasingly important role within the Nelson Tasman transport system. A clear link is also drawn between the roles of public transport and the complementary active transport modes. Improvements to walking and cycling routes around the urban areas in Nelson and Richmond will mean that more people can safely and easily access their nearest bus stops on foot, bike or scooter, thereby combining PT and active transport options to achieve Nelson Tasman’s vision for a more sustainable transport system.

### **7.8.3 Nelson Future Access and Richmond Business Case**

The **Nelson Future Access Study (NFA)** was led by Waka Kotahi, working with NCC and local iwi. NFA planned a transport system by identifying an investment programme supporting the community’s aspirations for a thriving City Centre, a people focused waterfront and a healthy environment.

The public was consulted on three long term packages in mid-2020. All assumed significant investment in public transport services and infrastructure, including intersection bus priority, with one package proposing future investment in priority lanes on the Waimea Road and State Highway 6 corridors.

The study is completed and the recommended programme, designed with stakeholders, includes investment in a range of different activities within Nelson City over the next 30 years. The programme increases the availability of attractive walking and cycling paths and public transport options close to areas of planned dense urban living, focuses on reliable journeys to support regional economic development, improves safety for everyone and makes urban neighbourhoods more liveable. In the medium to long term the programme focuses on improving the efficiency of public transport journeys across the network including the provision of priority lanes in select locations on the Waimea Road and State Highway 6 corridors. For more detail refer

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/nelson-future-access-project/>

The **Richmond Programme Business Case (RPBC)** was completed in 2021 by Waka Kotahi and TDC. It seeks to provide a sustainable and liveable urban environment and optimise the transport system within Richmond by addressing problems relating to increasing traffic volumes resulting from growth, and delays caused by traffic congestion. The implementation stage recommended upgrading intersections with bus optimisation, creating localised priority lanes, and building park and ride facilities. These changes would improve the level of service to bus routes in the Tasman district. For more detail refer

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/richmond-transport-programme-business-case/>

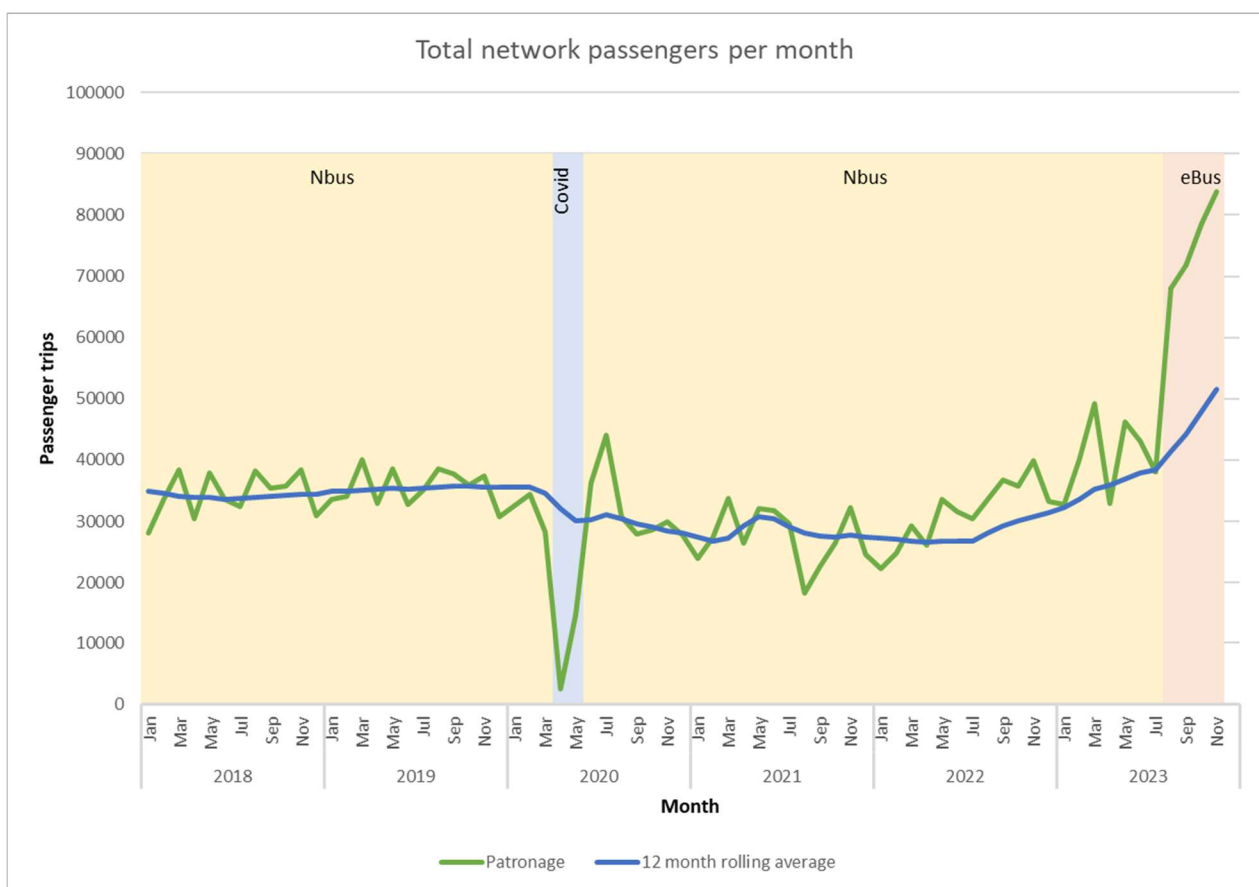


## 8. Current Performance

### 8.1 Patronage Trends

Patronage is a key indicator of public transport performance, both its level and rate of growth. Figure 8.1 shows the patronage performance of the Nelson Tasman regional bus networks between January 2018 and October 2023. This period includes the transition from the previous NBus to the first 3 months of the eBus services from 1 August 2023 and shows patronage levels before, during and after the impact of Covid-19, which had a negative patronage impact due to the Level 4 and 3 lockdown and social distancing requirements at Level 2 and above, although patronage rebounded at Level 1.

Figure 8-1: Total Monthly Patronage on Regional Bus Networks



The chart shows that under the previous NBus network patronage was steady between 34,000 and 35,000 boardings until declining from March 2020 to its lowest level of 26,832 in July 2022.

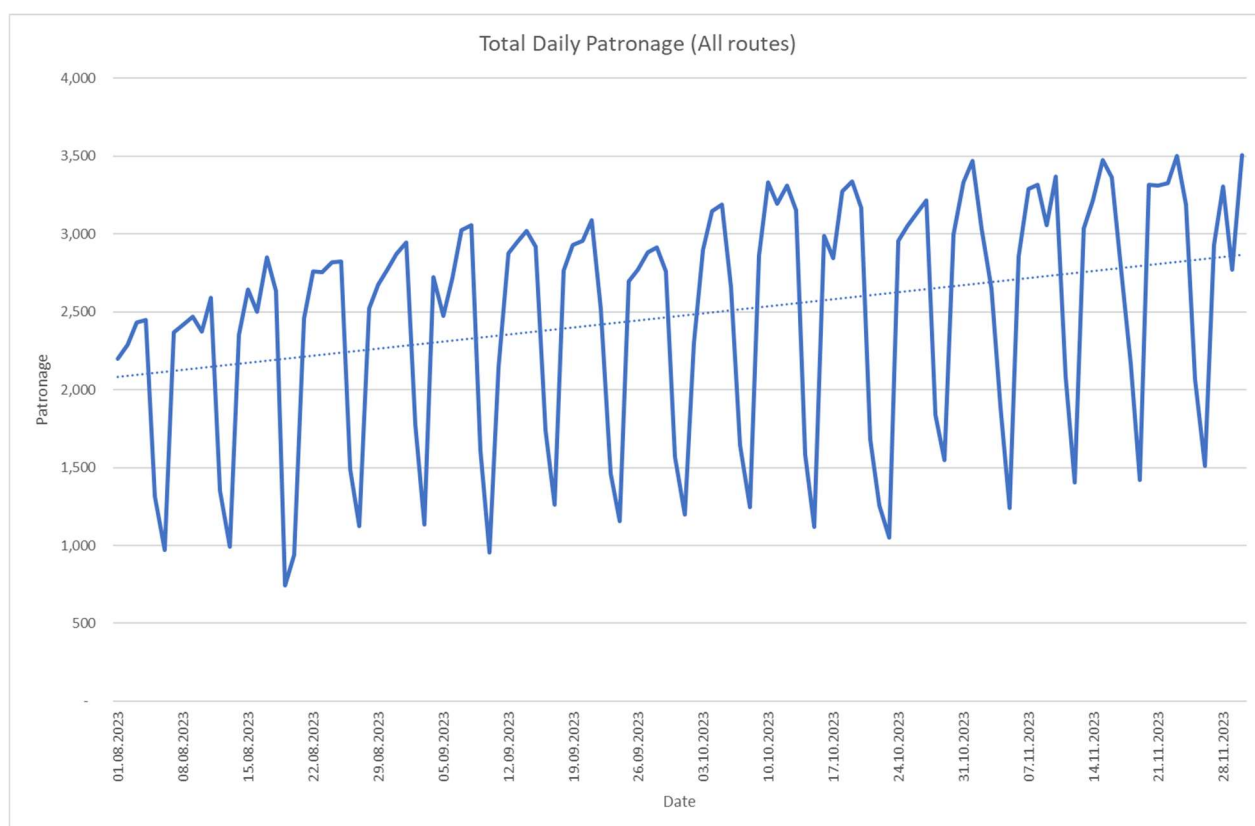
NBus patronage levels returned to pre-Covid levels in March of 2023 before reaching its highest level in July 2023. This growth phase may be attributable in part to government subsidies to enable half price bus fares introduced April 2022. The subsidy scheme was initially until 30 June 2022 but was extended twice. In the Nelson Tasman regions, the half price fare scheme was maintained until 31 July 2023 with the councils themselves funding the scheme from 1 July to 31 July when most other public transport authorities implemented the Community Connect Extension scheme. This local funding enabled

customers to transition to the new fare structure and new concessions at the time the eBus services started.

## 8.2 eBus Daily Patronage

Patronage levels on the eBus network have shown growth steadily from 2,197 passengers per day on 1 August, the first day of the services, to 3,500 on 30 November 2023 (Figure 8.2, below). Customer satisfaction surveys have not yet been conducted to determine the factors that are driving the growth. It is possible to infer from the patronage data that the impact of the step change improvements to routes, frequencies, connections and reliability have played a role. It is also likely that reduced fares and levels of concessions will have supported the success of the step change in the public transport network.

Figure 8.2: Total Daily Patronage on the eBus Network



## 8.3 eBus Patronage by Route

Table 8.1 below shows patronage by route across the eBus network for the first three months – August to October. It shows the dominance of two Nelson-Richmond routes, which serve a large population base and range of key destinations along the north-south spine, and consequently carry more people in total and per service km than the other urban routes. The main urban arterial services, Routes 1 and 2, account for 37.1% and 32.1% of the total patronage respectively, transporting an average of 11,732 passengers per week.

The next most patronised routes are Route 4 and Route 3 at 10.8% and 9.8% respectively and an average of 3,456 passengers between them.

When compared to the patronage under the NBus services (Table 8.2 below), the data suggests that the new network is seeing an increase in patronage across all scheduled urban services. The Late Late Bus which has experienced a slight decline in patronage, although it is

provided for primarily social and safety reasons, and the On demand service is yet to reach the patronage levels of the previous Stoke Loop services. The 12-month review at Stage One of this RPRT will help inform improvements to both services.

Table 8-1: eBus Performance by Route Since Launch 1 August -31 October 2023

eBus route	Aug-Oct 2023 patronage	Share of total patronage	Passengers per week	Average Passengers per trip	Passengers per service km
Route 1	80,952	37.1%	6,227	18.45	0.87
Route 2	71,566	32.8%	5,505	16.66	0.85
Route 3	21,382	9.8%	1,645	4.84	0.32
Route 4	23,549	10.8%	1,811	5.46	0.34
Route 5	9,611	4.4%	739	18.48	0.35
Route 6	6,963	3.2%	536	8.93	0.29
Route 7	3,114	1.4%	240	26.50	0.94
On Demand	534	0.2%	41	4.11	0.17
Late Late Bus	600	0.3%	46	1.94	0.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>218,271</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,790</b>		

Table 8.2 NBus Patronage by Route Since Launch 1 August -31 October 2023

Bus Route	Annual Patronage	Share of Total Patronage	Passengers Per Week	Passengers Per Round Trip	Passengers Per Service Km
Route 1	183,068	43%	3560	34.9	1.37
Route 2	181,373	42%	3527	34.6	1.24
Route 3	22,942	5%	446	5.5	0.34
Route 4	12,803	3%	249	3.1	0.30
Route 5	15,549	4%	302	3.7	0.37
Route 6	2,414	1%	47	3.1	0.29
Routes 7A, B, C	5,692	1%	111	4.4	0.24
Late Late Bus	3,227	1%	63	6.3	0.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>427,068</b>				

## 9. Public Transport Infrastructure

The eBus network has been supported by improvements to infrastructure at key locations such as Tahunanui Interchange, Richmond Interchange, and Nelson Airport. The improvements consist of a mixture of shelters and the installation of e-reader tablets with an audio function providing real time departure information for the services at that stop.

In addition to the interchange locations, e-readers have also been installed on Collingwood Street near Prices Pharmacy, at the Motueka Library stop, and in Wakefield.

Nelson City Centre Interchange at Bridge Street has been remodelled to provide a customer waiting room, a real time electronic timetable display and improved safety and amenity. Of the key interchanges only the hospital stops are still to be upgraded and this work is likely to tie in with building development work at the hospital itself.

Ongoing infrastructure improvements, including the installation of more seats and shelters, the acquisition of more e-readers, and provision of supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking will be made over time. Work in progress currently includes improvements to bus stop signage to enhance wayfinding across the network making stops more easily identifiable and improve visibility of the routes served by each stop.

The 12 stop locations proving to be the most patronised stops on the eBus network are shown in Table 9.1 below.

*Table 9.1 Most Patronised Bus Stops (Boardings Since Launch 1 August -31 October 2023)*

<b>Stop ranking</b>	<b>Stop</b>
1	Nelson City Centre Interchange
2	Richmond Interchange Eastbound
3	Nelson Hospital Interchange Southbound
4	Main Road Stoke at Countdown
5	Stoke Interchange Southbound
6	Richmond Interchange Westbound
7	Rutherford Street at Nelson College for Girls
8	Main Road Stoke opposite Polstead Road
9	Collingwood Street at Prices Pharmacy
10	Motueka Library Wallace Street

## 10. Public Feedback

Since the launch of the eBus services, the Councils have invited the public to provide feedback on all aspects of the bus services. This feedback will be collated and analysed after 12 months of service to inform the second stage of this RPTP.

While no formal analysis of the feedback received has been undertaken, common themes arising include but are not limited to the following:

- Requests for weekend services between Motueka and Nelson and Wakefield to Nelson,
- Timetabling improvements, including requests for earlier and later trips,
- Infrastructure improvements such as requests for seats and shelters,

- Route changes in particular requests to extend Route 3 in the Dodson Valley area,
- Suggestions for additional bus stop locations,
- Suggestions to improve accessibility to the buses and at bus stops,
- Requests to operate smaller buses on some sections of urban routes.

### **10.1 Consultation on Draft Regional Public Transport Plan**

A draft plan was shared with the community in parallel with the Regional Land Transport Plan in January and February 2024.

### **10.2 Assessment**

Positive feedback, or an improvement for the public transport service was noted 78 times, with requests for the service to start earlier, be more frequent and extend into the satellite towns the three most common themes. The feedback received will be used to inform the 1 year review of the eBus service.

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## 11.0 Proposed Improvement Investment Programme

The proposed programme is based on a programme of ongoing improvement and consolidation of the step changed introduced on 1 August 2023. It focuses on improved service levels, increased regional connections and increasing priority measures. It allows the Councils to reflect on 12 months of service data and feedback to deliver the adjustments required to optimise service delivery. Table 11.1 below summarises the staged change approach.

Continuing the staged approach will ensure that the most important programme elements are allowed sufficient time to settle and provide a good platform on which to build, with improvements incrementally increasing service levels to further strengthen the overall public transport offering. The staged approach will maintain affordability for ratepayers and taxpayers, since significant public investment will be required, and the benefits will accrue over a long period.

Bus priority, both short and long term, will be required to maintain public transport reliability and manage operating costs as traffic congestion worsens on key corridors. Any investment in priority will also improve public transport's travel time competitiveness relative to private vehicles, which is a key element of encouraging mode shift.

Both councils and Waka Kotahi support the establishment of bus priority via the Nelson Future Access and Richmond Programme Business Cases. The locations proposed are where traffic congestion is a problem, particularly at and near intersections, where delay is typically most acute and the benefit to public transport is the highest.

*Table 11.1 Staged Change Approach to Improvements*

### **Stage 1- July 2024-June 2027**

Implementation will follow and be informed by the 12-month eBus review and timing will be adjusted as required.

- Review the eBus step change following 12 months of services that began on 1 August 2023 including analysing real time operational data and public feedback to inform potential adjustments and improvements to service reliability, frequency, and accessibility.
- Implementation of minor network adjustments identified in the 12-month review as necessary to meet budget but strike a balance between enhancement of the network including but not limited to improving reliability, meeting capacity demands, increasing geographic coverage and supporting mode shift and considering savings from poor performing services.
- Review of fare policy and concession categories and respond to the central government change in policy on Community Connect. This is likely to include continuation of funding support for half price public transport concessions for Community Services Card holders and half price concessions for Total Mobility services (75% discount). However, Crown funding for free fares for 5-12 year olds and half price fares for 13-24 year olds on public transport will end on 30 April 2024.
- Respond to any central government change in policy on community connect.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus stop infrastructure and information/wayfinding improvements to build and improve convenience and broaden public awareness of the current services.</li> <li>• Continuing improvements to the eBus website and information systems to enhance customer service levels and experience.</li> <li>• Implement National Ticketing Solution to replace the Bee Card</li> <li>• Millers Acre Bus Hub.</li> <li>• Bus signal priority measures.</li> <li>• Additional weekend bus services on regional routes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 2 – July 2027 – June 2030</b></p> <p>Implementation will follow and be informed by the 12-month eBus review and timing will be adjusted as required.</p> <p>Additional routes and any route changes will be identified in the 2027-37 RPTP review:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased peak hour frequencies on key urban routes.</li> <li>• Supporting community transport options for Golden Bay, and Hira.</li> <li>• Bus priority measures, with the inclusion of any priority measures from the Nelson Future Access Project and Richmond Programme Business Case.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 3 (Reviewed in 2027 RPTP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of urban development and intensification proposals to target any new PT opportunities.</li> </ul>

### 11.1 Longer Term Investment

The programme has a 10-year focus, based on the RPTP horizon. However, it is expected that improvements will continue beyond the first decade, and some revisions/additions to the network maybe be required should growth justify it. The following may be considered:

- Diversion of Route 1 between Hill Street in Richmond and Suffolk Road/Saxton Road in the Saxton area if a new road link is constructed, to provide better access to the sports complex and the southeast area of Stoke;
- Route changes or a new route connecting The Ridgeway, and the Marsden and Ngawhatu valleys (which would be facilitated via a road link between the two), with Stoke, if development in the area reaches sufficient scale;
- Route changes or a new route serving the southwest area of Stoke;
- Extension of Route 3 beyond Atawhai to Todds Valley and possibly beyond;
- Route changes or a new route serving the southeast area of Richmond if development in the area reaches sufficient scale;
- Route changes or a new route connecting the Maitai Valley with Nelson if development in the area reaches sufficient scale;

- A route to service the Princes Drive/ Tahunanui Hills area;
- Connecting the above new routes with each other or possibly Route 3, to provide better access to a range of destinations;
- Route changes or a new route connecting Kaiteriteri with Motueka;
- Additional park and ride at gateway locations, such as the southern side of Richmond and at Atawhai or Todds Valley; and
- Ferry links where suitable wharf facilities are available, potentially supported by park and ride.

All of the above have been considered through this review and cannot be justified at present, but they may be justifiable beyond the first decade.

## **11.2 Total Mobility**

- Continue to administer and support the region-wide Total Mobility scheme;
- Continue to improve the administration and management of the scheme, and to meet Waka Kotahi requirements;
- All taxi companies in the scheme are required to have contracts with Council;
- Facilitate the provision of wheelchair hoist vehicles where demand warrants it and funding permits;
- Admittance to become a service provider is at the discretion of Council and is not restricted to taxi companies. Each application will be considered on its merits, but generally the requirements are that drivers be appropriately licensed and trained, the service availability hours are at least 7am to 7pm, and the fare structure is clear, similar to other providers and has been approved by Council. The provision of a wheelchair service is desirable but not mandatory;
- Review fares and the rules applying to the fares as part of the fare level and fare structure reviews;
- Extension of the Total Mobility subsidy to include all public transport services.

## **12 Impacts**

### **12.1 Anticipated Service Levels and Patronage**

Table 12.1 shows projected network patronage demand over the decade, including that resulting from the impact of the 2023 improvements and those associated with the proposed programme.

The full patronage impact of any intervention can take up to a decade, so some of the long term effect of later stage improvements falls outside of the timeframe shown in the table. Whilst the patronage increases primarily reflect the effect of service level increases and fare reductions, some allowance has been made for the system effect of the full suite of improvements.



Table 12.1: Projected Network Patronage

Financial Year	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31
<b>2021 RPTP projected patronage (000)</b>	746	829	979	1,031	1,076	1,124	1,208	1,261
<b>2024 RPTP revised projected patronage (000)</b>	997	1108	1308	1378	1438	1502	1614	1685

The ramp up effect of changes may be faster or slower than shown in the table, so performance and patronage will be monitored to identify the response over time. A faster than anticipated response to early stage improvements may require the implementation of some or all of the later stage improvements to be accelerated, particularly if additional peak capacity is needed to meet demand, since peak frequency improvements are not scheduled for introduction on Routes 1 and 2 until 2029.

## 12.2 Costs

Operating costs, shown in table 12.2, including Total Mobility costs, form the bulk of costs, totalling \$121.5m for the Nelson Tasman Region over the decade.

Net costs are subject to patronage and to any inflation over the period and could be positively or negatively impacted by the competitiveness of the bus contract retendering process in 2032. The cost projections in the table are deliberately conservative given this uncertainty.

Table 12.2 Projected Public Investment Requirements – Services and Infrastructure

	Year 1 24/25 (\$k)	Year 2 25/26 (\$k)	Year 3 26/27 (\$k)	Year 4 27/28 (\$k)	Year 5 28/29 (\$k)	Year 6 29/30 (\$k)	Year 7 30/31 (\$k)	Year 8 31/32 (\$k)	Year 9 32/33 (\$k)	Year 10 33/34 (\$k)
<b>Services</b>	\$9,347	\$10,039	\$11,704	\$11,963	\$12,026	\$15,588	\$15,721	\$15,766	\$15,922	\$16,118
<b>Infrastructure (Nelson)</b>	\$3,045	\$1,609	\$706	\$977	\$889	\$1,019	\$1,374	\$379	\$506	\$1,483
<b>Infrastructure (Tasman)</b>	\$62	\$64	\$66	\$67	\$69	\$70	\$72	\$73	\$75	\$76

The Millers Acre hub is likely to have the largest direct capital cost impact in the Nelson Region together with completion of works at Tahunanui and the Hospital.

Bus priority requirements and costs recommended by the Nelson Future Access and Richmond Transport business cases are excluded from the above as more investigation on the type of vehicle to use the lane and thus the funding category is required. Park and Ride carpark requirements and costs are also subject to further investigation.

## 13 Specific Council Policies Relating to Bus Services

### 13.1 Fares Policy

It is a statutory requirement to include fares and a pricing policy in the regional public transport plan. This in turn must be prepared in accordance with any relevant Waka Kotahi guidelines<sup>2</sup>.

Waka Kotahi requires fare levels to be reviewed annually, and the fare structure will be reviewed every six years. This review of fare levels has taken into account matters such as inflation (particularly relating to the cost of providing the bus service), fare-box recovery, Council and Waka Kotahi funding levels and policies, and users' ability to pay.

This revised Fare Policy will be in accordance with the relevant Waka Kotahi guidelines.

The contractor's views will be sought as part of any fare review.

In March 2024 NZTA issued a document "Draft Fares and pricing requirements for public transport authorities", for consultation. The draft describes requirements and guidance for public transport fares and pricing policy.

The draft document sets out Waka Kotahi expectation of what is required to meet these statutory requirements.

Fares and pricing policy in RPTPs **must**:

- Provide clear objectives that balance financial sustainability, transport system efficiency and equity.
- Reflect the important role of passenger fares in helping cover the cost of public transport and include public transport cost recovery measures as defined by NZTA.
- Ensure fare revenue supports the level of NLTF funding approved by NZTA and is consistent with the revenue and financing policy in council long-term plans.
- Specify any national, Crown and regional fare concessions, including eligibility criteria and fare levels or discounts that apply in the region for those concessions (refer fare concession requirements).
- Specify the method for setting and reviewing fares, with fare pricing reviews to occur annually and fare structure reviews at least six-yearly.
- Ensure annual fare pricing reviews consider the effectiveness of alternative interventions for achieving the fare and pricing policy objectives including other potential revenue sources, reducing operating costs and/or wider system efficiencies.
- Specify any fares and pricing measures and targets advised by NZTA (refer fares and pricing measures below).

Public Transport Authorities **should** seek to minimise the use of cash over time and include in the fares and pricing policy a position regarding use of cash.

The joint Nelson/Tasman RPTP is cognisant of these guidelines and once finalised take these into account in the next fare review.

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<sup>2</sup> [LTMA section 124\(a\)\(ii\)](#)

## **13.2 Integration with Other Transport Modes**

The fundamental outcome of the 10-year vision for transport in the Nelson-Tasman region is to provide a fully integrated and sustainable transport system where:

- All modes of transport are catered for and complement each other;
- The barriers for access are removed;
- The benefits of alternative transport modes for individuals, the community and the environment are fully apparent and recognised; and
- Public transport services in the region are a fundamental part of an integrated network of transport services.

These goals recognise that all journeys usually involve other modes of transport as well as the bus trip (there is almost always a walking component of any bus journey, and increasingly, a cycling component). Other factors that will be considered to ensure the public transport system integrates with other modes include:

- The needs of bus passengers who use wheelchairs;
- The bike rack capacity of buses;
- If bus-stops are conveniently situated and are easily accessible by all active modes;
- If car-parking facilities are available near to stops (particularly in Richmond) to enable car users to include public transport or multimodal journey options in their journey planning; and
- How car parking availability and charges impact on bus use.

## 13.3 Objectives and Policies

### Objectives

Historically the basic objectives of the Council provided public transport network have been to provide services which:

- Reduce traffic congestion between Richmond and Nelson; and
- Meet the basic needs of the community, particularly those without access to private vehicles, to provide transport choices.

These two objectives are replaced with three objectives which closely align with draft 2023 Government Policy Statement on Transport, the Councils' community outcomes and carbon emission reduction. That is to provide a regional integrated public transport network that:

1. Provides attractive, economic and viable transport choices for all sectors of the community,
2. Reduces the reliance on private cars,
3. Is sustainable and reduces carbon emissions.

These link to all of the six Te Taihu strategic objectives adopted in the Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31 below:



### Policies

#### **Services provided**

- Jointly deliver public transport in the Nelson Tasman region as a coordinated integrated service and network
- Provide and fund bus services which:
  - Contribute to the development of a sustainable transport framework in the Nelson Tasman region; and/or
  - Are planned to provide transport choices and specifically provide choices and improve accessibility for those without other transport options;

- Provide transport choices within both the urban and regional areas;
- Regularly assess the needs of the community with regard to its public transport and accessibility needs;
- Work with its bus contractors to improve its services and increase patronage levels.

### ***New services***

- New services will be provided:
  - Where there is demand;
  - To encourage behaviour change;
  - To improve accessibility and urban spaces; and
  - Where local and Waka Kotahi funding is available.

### ***Funding***

- Fund its share of the services set out in this RPTP;
- Seek appropriate funding contributions from Waka Kotahi;
- Both councils to jointly collaborate to continue to secure funding for the bus services;
- Seek funding from Waka Kotahi for any service improvements.

### ***Contractors***

- For all new contracts:
  - Prepare a business plan in conjunction with each contractor setting out the actions, aimed at improving the service that will be taken during the next year of the contract;
  - Review the business plan annually;
  - Regularly meet with the contractors to discuss progress with achieving the actions set out in the business plan, progress generally with the services, and ways to increase passenger numbers;
- Meet regularly with existing contractors to discuss contractual matters, including how the service might be improved and patronage increased;
- Generally involve the contractor in decisions relating to the service, while at the same time recognising that it is the Councils that are the primary decision maker regarding the services.

### ***Contract format***

- The tendering of the bus contracts will follow the process set out in the Council's Procurement Strategies and Waka Kotahi Procurement Manual;
- Subject to the Procurement Strategy and Procurement Manual, contract length will generally be nine years;
- Contracts will require operators to tender on the annual gross price of providing the service and Council will retain passenger revenue;
- The services will be operated as a single operating unit,
- There will be one contract per unit, and thus currently there will be one contract;

- All new contracts will contain a financial incentive mechanism aimed at encouraging the contractor to increase patronage;
- Tenders will reflect the policies in this RPTP and the two Councils.

### **Procurement Strategy**

- Tenders will be evaluated on price and quality. Quality features will include relevant experience, track record, relevant management and technical skills, methodology and vehicle quality.

### **Vehicles and drivers**

- All buses should comply with the vehicle standards set out in Waka Kotahi's guidelines, including modern low floor buses on all routes,
- Vehicle specifications to include low or zero emission buses,
- Comply with the vehicle standards as set out in Waka Kotahi guidelines.

### **Requirements for all buses as a minimum.**

- Require bike racks on all routes,
- Wifi,
- Require electronic ticket systems on all buses,
- Require GPS tracking on buses to assist with real time tracking for customers and monitoring by Council,
- Include, in any new public transport contract, a suitable driver standard with which all bus drivers must comply,
- Require branding as specified by Council.

### **Fare system**

- Require electronic ticketing on all buses that records all trips and issues tickets as appropriate,
- Enable introduction of national ticketing incentives including Project Next,
- Enable introduction and removal of incentives that lower the fare from national or regional organisations (e.g. Community Connect)
- Fares:
  - Child fares will be available
    - i) Children are defined as those aged 5-18 inclusive, or enrolled at school while wearing a school uniform or on presentation of a school ID card,
    - ii) The child fare will be approximately half<sup>3</sup> of the adult fare,
    - iii) Children under 5 travel free.
  - A tertiary students/Community Service Card holder cash fare will be available to those enrolled in a Nelson or Tasman tertiary institution on presentation of an ID card, and

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<sup>3</sup> The exact discount will be influenced by the necessary rounding

- Community Services Card holders on presentation of their card,
- The SuperGold Card scheme providing free off-peak travel<sup>4</sup> is available to those with a SuperGold Card and travelling with a Bee Card (generally those over 65 years of age),
- Fares will be set on a zone structure or as adopted in this RPTP,
- For the Late Bus, a separate fare structure will apply (currently a flat fare),
- Smartcards will be available from designated outlets (NCC and TDC council offices, and Nelson, Stoke and Richmond libraries),
- 
- Fare levels will be reviewed annually, which may result in the above fares and ticket availability changing,
  - The contractor will be involved in these discussions. In setting fares, the primary considerations will be the level of inflation as it relates to the costs of providing the service, affordability, Waka Kotahi, TDC and NCC funding levels and policies, and the joint Council Fare Policy<sup>5</sup>,
- Fare structures will be reviewed up to every six years. The last review was in 2017, implemented in 2020, this RPTP has included a fare structure review for implementation in 2024.

### ***SuperGold Card***

- Bus contractors will be required to participate in the SuperGold Card scheme as it relates to public transport,
- NCC and TDC will jointly administer the SuperGold Card scheme subsidies,

### ***Monitoring***

- Monitor services based on Waka Kotahi requirements,
- Collect monthly patronage data,
- Contracts will provide for reliability data to be collected by the contractor and made available to the Councils,
- Vehicles on all bus service to have a GPS monitoring system to assist in measuring service reliability,
- In conjunction with the contractor, regularly review the routes and timetables to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the community,
- Undertake an annual survey of passengers as required by Waka Kotahi

### ***Infrastructure***

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<sup>4</sup> For travel between 9am and 3.00pm weekdays, and on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays

<sup>5</sup> This policy is re-produced in Appendix E

- Look to improve the central urban bus stops in Nelson and Richmond through the provision of improved shelter, seats, timetable information and other facilities,
- Develop 'superstop' facilities at up to 5 locations: Nelson and Richmond City Centres, Stoke, Tahunanui and the Hospital, ultimately this level of facility will be developed in other key locations,
- Conveniently located bus stops,
- Look to improve bus-stop facilities including providing shelters and easy access to the stops for those in wheelchairs.

### ***Integration with other transport modes***

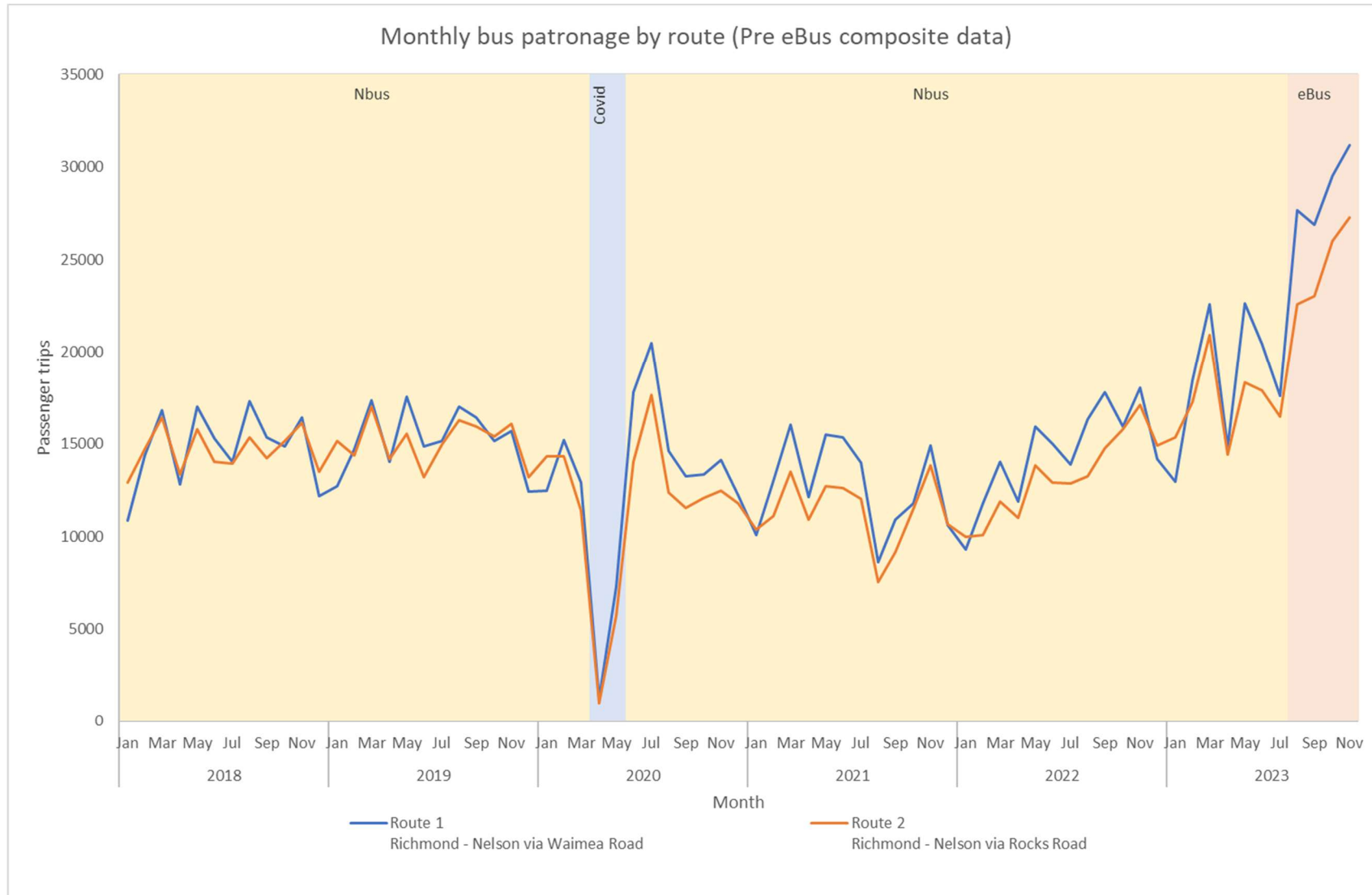
- Actively deliver public transport investment as part of the sustainable 10-year transport vision for the region,
- Encourage further integration between the buses and walking and cycling through promotion, infrastructure, and specific facilities, including road crossing safety, safety for vulnerable users accessing bus stops, public transport access around schools, NMIT, nodes of employment, shopping, recreation and activity centres
- Require bike racks on all buses,
- Consider buses when addressing car-parking availability and charging,
- Ensure bus-stops are conveniently located, high quality and easily accessible.

### ***Promotion and advertising***

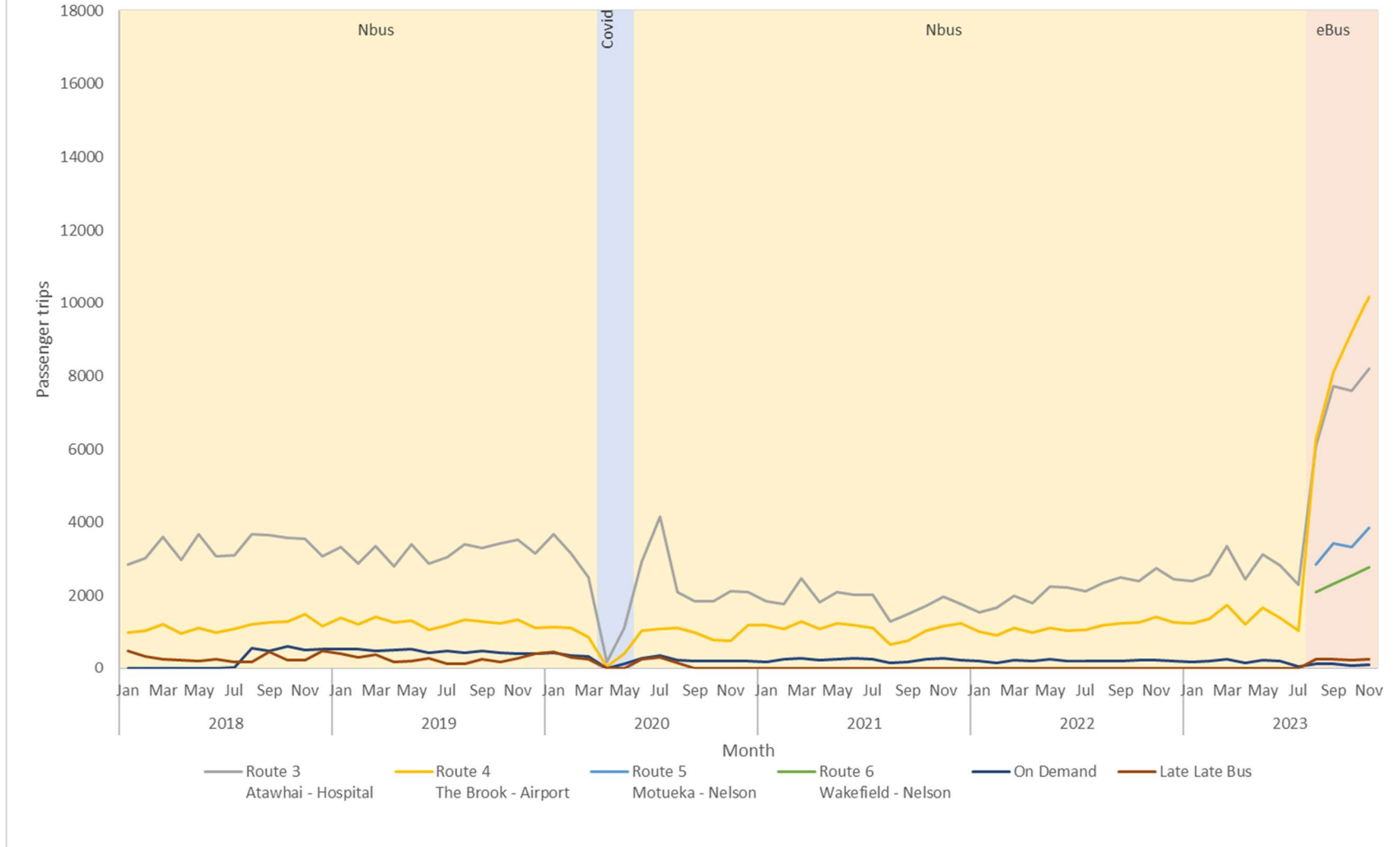
- Undertake an innovative and enhanced promotion campaign to increase the attractiveness of PT to the wider community, to identify how everyone can benefit and gain by increased PT use, to promote opportunities to improve health, wellbeing, urban spaces and amenity, whilst contributing to achieving the emission reduction targets,
- Through information being available at key bus stops and on the NCC and TDC website,
- Through the production of a freely available printed timetable,
- Through strong social media,
- Through an easy to use phone app, and Google Transit,
- Through local newspapers (including community newsletters) and radio,
- On-bus advertising, including opportunities to advertise on buses
- Buses will provide for the internal display of Councils and public transport promotional material.



## APPENDIX A - Service use graphs



Monthly bus patronage by route (Pre eBus composite data)



## **APPENDIX B - Background and context**

### **Legislative requirements**

Section 124 of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 requires that a Regional Public Transport Plan must:

- Contribute to the purposes of the LTMA;
- Have been prepared in accordance with Waka Kotahi guidelines;
- Be consistent with any Regional Land Transport Plan;
- Apply the principles specified in the Act, namely:
  - Councils and operators should work in partnership to deliver services and infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of passengers;
  - The provision of services should be coordinated with the aim of achieving the levels of integration, reliability, frequency, and coverage necessary to encourage passenger growth;
  - Competitors should have access to public transport markets to increase confidence that services are priced efficiently;
  - Incentives should exist to reduce reliance on public subsidies to cover the cost of providing public transport services;
  - The planning and procurement of public transport services should be transparent.
- Take into account:
  - Any national energy efficiency and conservation strategy;
  - Any relevant district plan;
  - The public transport funding likely to be available;
  - The need to obtain the best value for money, having regard to the desirability of encouraging a competitive and efficient market for public transport services;
  - The views of public transport operators;

Council has taken into account all the above requirements when preparing this RPTP.

### **Assistance of the transport disadvantaged**

The RPTP is required to describe how it will assist the *transport disadvantaged*<sup>15</sup>. This RPTP assists the transport disadvantaged through supporting routes, timetables designed to take passengers from where they live to places they want to go at a reasonable fare.

### **Fare-box Recovery Policy**

In March 2024 NZTA issued a document "Draft Fares and pricing requirements for public transport authorities", for consultation. The draft describes requirements and guidance for public transport fares and pricing policy:

- to support the efficient delivery of the national ticketing solution
- as a step towards aligning with government direction as signalled in the draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024 with further work due to commence
- to replace lapsed NZTA fare policy published in 2010
- to provide greater certainty for all parties

The guidelines are still in draft and clearly recognise the role fare policy plays in achieving transport outcomes and that this should be made explicit when planning public transport systems. They encourage clear RPTP objectives that outline how regional fare policy will deliver and balance financial sustainability, system efficiency and greater equity, with a strong focus on fare revenue management, and sustainable cost recovery.

NZTA previously had fare policy which has lapsed. This included a national farebox recovery policy and fare policy decision-making guide published in 2010 and fare policy guidelines for RPTPs published in 2013.

This document rescinds prior farebox policy and guidance and specifies updated base requirements and guidance. Except where otherwise stated, the content in the consultation document is not new per se. Rather it aims to simplify and consolidate prior material and provide greater certainty for all parties.

The document specifies a new definition of farebox recovery as being the private share of operating costs. The new definition differs to the prior lapsed definition. The primary differences relate to making a more accurate distinction between public and private funding sources. For example, Crown funding for SuperGold card concessions was previously counted as fare revenue. Under the new definition all sources of Crown funding are counted as part of the public share of operating costs along with local and NZTA funding sources.

NZTA is currently working with the Ministry of Transport to ensure alignment with government policy and will provide further information on farebox recovery requirements in due course.

However the draft document signals the future expectation that Public Transport Authorities **must** utilise the following definition of farebox recovery when setting and assessing any relevant targets in their fares and pricing policy:

- **Formula**

$$\text{Farebox recovery} = \frac{\text{Private share of operating expenditure}}{\text{Total operating expenditure}}$$

## Significance Policy

All regional public transport plans are required by the LTMA to include a “significance policy”. This policy determines if any proposed change to a RPTP is significant (in which case it must follow certain consultation requirements as set out in the Act) or not (in which case an abbreviated process can be used).

The Council significance policy in relation to this RPTP is set out in **Appendix C**. Essentially the policy states that small changes, and changes that have already been the subject of consultation, can be treated as “not significant” and thus need not be the subject of extensive consultation. More significant changes may require the preparation of a new Regional Public Transport Plan (and associated consultation).

## **APPENDIX C – Regional Public Transport Plan Significance Policy**

This policy is required, in accordance with section 120(4) of the Land Transport Management Act 2003, to set out how to determine the significance of proposed variations to this RPTP.

### **Application**

This RPTP can be varied at any time. However in accordance with section 126(4) of the Land Transport Management Act 2003, the usual consultation will not be required if the proposed variation is considered not significant under this policy.

The approach to consultation will reflect the level of significance of any proposed variation. Consideration will be given to the costs and benefits of any consultative process or procedure and the extent to which consultation has already taken place.

The implication of not meeting the significance threshold is that the full consultation requirements of the LTMA will not need to be followed. However, the two Councils may undertake targeted consultation on matters affecting specific communities and stakeholders, even if the significance threshold outlined in this policy is not invoked.

### **General determination of significance**

The significance of variations to this RPTP will be determined by the two Councils on a case by case basis. When determining the significance of a variation, consideration must be given to the extent to which the variation:

- Signals a material change to the planned level of investment in the public transport network;
- Impacts on the purpose of the LTMA;
- Affects residents (variations with a moderate impact on a large number of residents, or variations with a major impact on a small number of residents will have greater significance than those with a minor impact);
- Affects the integrity of this RPTP, including its overall affordability;
- Has already been the subject of consultation with affected parties.

### **Significant and non-significant matters**

Matters that will always be considered 'significant' are:

- Any variation that amends this policy on significance;
- Major changes to existing services, or the introduction of new services, (other than changes to or the introduction of trial services), for which no consultation regarding the change or introduction has occurred.
- Matters that will usually be considered 'significant' are:
- Changes to units that significantly affect the financial viability of the contractor of that unit.

Matters that will always be considered 'not significant' are:

- Minor editorial and typographical amendments to this RPTP;

- Minor changes to fare levels in accordance with current policy and funding levels;
- A matter that has already been consulted on, including the addition, removal or amendment of any matter or service;
- Minor changes to the description of services following a review of that service e.g. changes to the frequency, route or hours of a service which result in the same, or better, level of service;
- Changes to the description of services or grouping of services as a result of an area wide service review, provided that there is no significant increase in cost;
- Minor changes of routes and/or timetables to existing services;
- The introduction, alteration or deletion of trial services;
- The introduction of a new unit provided the contractors of existing units are not affected.

### **Targeted consultation on non-significant variations**

Where the two Councils determine that a proposed variation is not significant, it may still undertake targeted consultation as follows:

#### ***a. Consultation for minor changes in the delivery of existing public transport services***

For minor changes in service delivery which are required to improve the efficiency of existing services, such as the addition or deletion of trips and minor route changes, and which have only a local impact, consultation will generally be undertaken at a low level with the operator/s involved, the relevant territorial authority, and passengers who use the services. If consultation has already occurred as part of a service investigation or review, no additional consultation need occur.

#### ***b. Addition of new services***

Where a new service is proposed and the new service has been the subject of community consultation, no additional consultation need occur.

#### ***c. Other non-significant variations***

Any proposals for changes that affect only a sector of the community or the industry (e.g. a change in Total Mobility provision, or a change to specific vehicle quality standards) may be worked through with those most likely to be affected, as well as other relevant stakeholders.