

REPORT

**Regional Land Transport Strategy
Working Draft Passenger Transport Plan**

Prepared for Tasman District Council

JULY 2009

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Regional Land Transport Strategy Working Draft Passenger Transport Plan

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1 Introduction

1.1 Visions & Objectives for Land Transport in Tasman District

The vision for Tasman District's land transport network contained in the Regional Land Transport Strategy is:

'To have a land transport system that will support a sustainable and prosperous economy, that is accessible by and serves the whole community, contributing to the better health, safety and wellbeing of those living within and visiting Tasman District.'

In turn, this vision responds to the requirements of the Amended Land Transport Management Act (2003) and is embodied in the following high level objectives for the land transport system:

- *Assist Economic Development:* A transport system that contributes to economic growth and prosperity
- *Safety & Personal Security:* A transport system that is safe to use across all transport modes
- *Access & Mobility:* An efficient transport system that is integrated with land use planning optimising access and mobility for all
- *Public Health:* A transport system that encourages active modes of travel
- *Environmental Sustainability:* A transport system that optimises energy efficiency and ensures the sustainability of the natural and built environment
- *Economic Efficiency:* A transport system that is affordable and provides value for money.

This vision and objectives are consistent with the New Zealand Transport Strategy 2008 (NZTS 2008) and the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport Funding (2009/10 – 2018/19).

Passenger Transport policies and programmes of activities have the potential to make a direct and positive contribution to meeting both the short to medium term impacts of the GPS, alongside laying the foundations for positive gains to be made over the longer term towards the NZTS 2008 objectives.

The purpose of this Passenger Transport Plan (PTP) for the Tasman District is to provide an overarching framework for the development of the Tasman region's passenger transport system for the 2009 to 2019 period and to support and give effect to the implementation of the public transport elements of the Tasman RLTS. The Passenger Transport Plan is necessary to outline the passenger transport services and infrastructure proposed for the region both for general travel purposes and in respect of servicing persons who are transport disadvantaged.

1.2 The Role of Passenger Transport in Tasman District

The mode of passenger transport that has the greatest potential to cater for high volume movements of people in the Tasman region is the bus. Therefore the main focus of this plan is the development of the public bus network. Other modes and means of public transport travel that have an interaction with that network include inter-regional coach services, total mobility services, taxi and shuttle services, school buses and pleasure craft services (i.e. tourist boat trips). These services provide transport for the general public with tours primarily focused on visitors to the area. While consideration of these modes has been taken into account in the preparation of this plan, the purpose of this plan is to focus upon scheduled passenger transport aimed at the general public.

The Tasman District Council's 2007 survey of residents identified a desire for better, cheaper and more frequent passenger transport services. However, the geographically large area of the Tasman District, coupled with the relatively low population means that the viability of new public transport services is limited in many areas. Nevertheless, this Passenger Transport Plan sets out a blueprint for delivering

phased improvements to the quality and quantity of passenger transport in an integrated fashion with the Nelson City Council's public transport plans.

2 Current Bus Service Provisions

There is currently no passenger rail or ferry available in the Tasman District. The bus network is mostly commercially operated, providing routes based on market demand. The coverage of the bus routes operating within the district includes:

- Urban access services linking Stoke, Nelson and Richmond
- Inter-regional links along major routes, for instance, from Nelson to Christchurch
- Specialised services targeting rural communities such as school buses being administered by the Ministry of Education which are presently run by commercial operators out of Nelson, Takaka, Motueka, Tapawera and Murchison
- Seasonal tourist services

The corridor bus service between Nelson and Richmond is the primary focus of bus services in the Tasman Region, operating Monday to Sunday on a limited frequency with gaps of up to two hours during the off peak. A regular commercial bus service also operates between Nelson CBD and Motueka/Kaiteriteri, with four trips per day in each direction during the summer and once per day each way during the winter. This service is timetabled to connect with Inter-city coaches travelling from outside the region. The vehicles are relatively old, have high steps and predate modern exhaust emission standards. The commercial bus operators would like to improve the service however further investment in the service in terms of service frequency or vehicle quality is not commercially viable for the current operator.

The level of service is very low in terms of both frequency and quality, for a well dispersed population of about 45,000 people residing in mainly towns and rural areas. Consequently, the number of people currently travelling to work by bus is low at around 0.5% of journey to work trips.

Although this level of bus usage is comparable with similar regions such as Hawkes Bay and Bay of Plenty (both 0.5% of journey to work trips) it is low compared with more populous regions such as Canterbury and Otago (being 2.4% and 2.0% respectively). While the New Zealand average of journey to work trips by bus is 3%, this is somewhat skewed by larger figures for Auckland and Wellington.

On Friday and Saturday evenings a publicly funded bus route operates between Nelson and Richmond, catering for night club goers. In addition there are a number of school bus services operating throughout the region.

3 Passenger Transport Plan

3.1 Key Policy Linkages to the GPS and LTMA

In order to offer the maximum synergy with the Government's desired GPS impacts for transportation, it is essential that the Passenger Transport Plan and policies and activities within it, support the following desired impacts of the GPS for 2009/10 – 2018/19:

- Contribute to meeting the Government's key priority to increase national economic growth and productivity
- Achieving value for money
- Encouraging integrated planning
- Making best use of existing networks and infrastructure - implementing and fostering coordinated approaches

- Considering the impact of volatile fuel prices

These are expressed in the GPS as follows:

- A** Improvements in the provision of infrastructure and services that enhance transport efficiency and lower the cost of transportation through:
 - A1** Improvements in journey time reliability
 - A2** Easing of severe congestion
 - A3** More efficient freight supply chains
 - A4** Better use of existing transport capacity
- B** Better access to markets, employment and areas that contribute to economic growth
- C** A secure and resilient transport network

With other sought impacts including:

- D** Reductions in deaths and serious injuries through road crashes
- E** More transport choices, particularly for those with limited access to a car, where appropriate
- F** Reductions in adverse environmental effects from land transport
- G** Contributions to positive health outcomes

At the same time, the Government also expects to see progress against the key aims of the Land Transport Management Act 2003, namely:

- a.** Assisting economic development
- b.** Assisting safety and personal security
- c.** Improving access and mobility
- d.** Protecting and promoting public health
- e.** Ensuring environmental sustainability

3.2 Passenger Transport Plan approach

A prerequisite for sustainable and successful passenger transport services is the existence of a geographic concentration of demand. The origin of most people's trips is the home and the level of demand for passenger transport arising from residential areas depends on a range of factors including housing density, demographics, proximity to employment, retail, education and healthcare facilities etc. The relatively dispersed and low density nature of the region gives rise to inherent challenges and difficulties for developing and operating a public transport system in Tasman District. The clear exception to this is Richmond and nearby towns connecting to Nelson.

The fundamental issue for the Tasman region in achieving greater use of passenger transport is the lack of population density over the district. Deficiencies on the supply side in terms of quality and quantity of the current passenger transport network is constraining current passenger demand in the Richmond-Nelson corridor.

This Public Transport Plan will consider the Tasman Public Transport system in two parts: the Nelson-Richmond corridor and the remaining intra-regional system operating between the region's towns. The Nelson-Richmond corridor focuses on the cross-boundary planning with the delivery required to be integrated with Nelson City. The services for the rest of the region will focus on investigating the potential for public transport, especially now that the Public Transport Management Act has been enacted.

The low level of service and patronage does mean that there is presently little historic data available to use as a base to estimate future passenger demand. In order to assess the level of services for both parts of the Tasman system more information is required over the next three years and beyond.

3.3 Passenger Transport Policies and Activities

In developing the key PT policies and activities, consideration has been given to their applicability to the region and their conformity with both the GPS and LTMA. This will enable the region to seek appropriate support and funding through the GPS defined Activity Classes for Transportation, as contained in the GPS of May 2009.

To guide the implementation of passenger transport improvements and to support the ongoing operation of passenger transport, a range of specific policies have been developed. The policies cover three broad areas:

- Passenger Transport Network
- Vehicle & Infrastructure Standards
- Fares, Ticketing, Marketing and Passenger Transport Information

3.3.1 Passenger Transport Network

The bus network should meet the travel needs of the community. To meet these needs the network has to provide for a wide range of journey purposes. This can be achieved using a Balanced Network approach which essentially seeks to cater for all trip purposes by balancing priorities and targeting resources to where they will benefit the greatest number of people. These fundamental principles for the provision of bus services should be applied to both the Richmond-Nelson corridor and services in the remainder of the region.

Nelson City Council has undertaken some preliminary investigation into options for improving the public transport provision along the Nelson-Richmond corridor. A summary of this investigation is included in the Nelson Passenger Transport Network Plan within their Regional Land Transport Strategy. Tasman District Council supports the need for improvements to the passenger transport network along this corridor but considers that further investigation is needed to determine the extent of the improvements, the viability of the improved services and the timeframe for implementation.

While improved bus services are appropriate for the core corridor between Nelson and Richmond, other initiatives could be used to encourage commercial passenger transport within and between other urban areas. It is proposed to further investigate potential options in these locations.

Changes in land use give rise to changes in demand for transport. Well considered land use planning can reduce the need to travel, for example by locating residential and commercial land uses in close proximity. For larger residential and commercial developments, future-proofing the urban design ensure adequate pedestrian connections to possible passenger transport routes.

Policy PT1	Passenger Transport Network
	To adopt a phased approach to the implementation of improved passenger transport services network subject to the availability of funding and agreement on cross boundary issues.

Activity	Delivery Timeframe	Contributes to GPS and RTMA Impacts														
		A	A	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b	c	d	e
		1	2	3	4											
Work with Nelson City Council to develop an implementation plan for improved passenger transport services between Nelson and Richmond	Short Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Investigate other intra-regional network opportunities with commercial operators to improve passenger transport.	Short Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Review the provisions in the Resource Management Plan related to subdivision standards for design and layout to support public transport, and the provisions for passenger transport infrastructure and services related to new residential and commercial developments.	Medium Term			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.3.2 Vehicle and Infrastructure Standards

Vehicle Standards

The design and quality of vehicles plays a crucial role in the success of a passenger transport service. Vehicles should have design attributes that are appealing to the public in the same way that car designs appeal to the public. Vehicles should cater for the widest possible cross section of the community in terms of vehicle accessibility. Good vehicle design features includes: wide access door/s, low floor step less entry, provision of hand rails, provision for wheelchair access and berthing, provision of priority seats for elderly persons, seating pitch that caters for taller people, provision for luggage, storage of buggies and cycle racks.

Vehicle emissions are one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. While there are a number of vehicles utilising new technology available, the benefits and risks of these are yet to be proven. Nevertheless, Council will require passenger service vehicles to meet a certain emission standard

Policy PT2	Vehicle Standards
	Passenger transport vehicles used in the Tasman District are accessible for the mobility impaired, provide for cyclists and have effective emission controls.

Activity	Delivery Timeframe	3.3.3 Contributes to GPS and RTMA Impacts															
		A	A	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b	c	d	e	
		1	2	3	4												
Encourage buses service providers operating on routes in the Tasman region to use wheelchair accessible buses	Medium Term					✓		✓	✓					✓	✓		
Investigate the feasibility of fitting cycle racks or cycle trailers to buses	Medium Term	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure all buses operating contracted express and secondary routes in the Tasman region should meet at least EURO 4 but preferably EURO 5 exhaust emissions standards.	Medium Term									✓	✓				✓	✓	

Passenger Infrastructure Standards

For passenger transport to be convenient to the public, it needs to be accessible close to where people live and destinations. This means the provision, location and separation of bus stops is very important. Likewise the provision of shelter from the elements is an important service attribute to ensure bus services are attractive all year round. No bus network has a bus shelter at every bus stop across a whole network, however many local authorities aim to provide a bus shelter at key bus stop locations where there is a concentration of passenger demand.

Integration with walking and cycling can be achieved by ensuring bus stops are properly connected to footpaths and pedestrian crossing facilities are provided nearby where needed (i.e. where traffic flows are high). The provision of cycle parking nearby key bus stops will enhance integration between cycling and passenger transport.

Policy PT3	Passenger Infrastructure Standards Bus stops which are accessible, safe and attractive.
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Activity	Delivery Timeframe	Contributes to GPS and RTMA Impacts														
		A	A	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b	c	d	e
		1	2	3	4											
Manage the provision of bus stops on the basis that bus stops are provided at locations where there is an identifiable passenger demand.	Medium Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Ensure supporting pedestrian and cycle facilities such as footpaths, pedestrian crossing points/refuges, and cycle parking are provided (where appropriate) to enable excellent walking and cycle access to and from bus stops	Medium Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Investigate the provision of a bus interchange in Richmond and bus priority measures in adjacent areas, and implement the findings of the investigations.	Medium Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

3.3.4 Fares, Ticketing, Marketing and Passenger Transport Information

Fares

Fares are a key element of funding for the operation of public transport. Fares for commercial passenger transport services are set by the operator with Tasman District Council having no control over them. Fares for contracted passenger transport are usually set by a Regional Council, as the balance between operating costs and fare revenue is provided as a subsidy by way of the contract payments, usually sourced from a combination of rates and NZTA funding.

Concessionary fares should be available for the transport disadvantaged.

Policy PT4	Fares Fares which encourage the use of passenger services while taking account of operating costs
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Activity	Delivery Timeframe	Contributes to GPS and RTMA Impacts														
		A	A	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b	c	d	e
		1	2	3	4											
Work with Nelson City Council to set fares on the Nelson-Richmond routes that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage/incentivise use of services, take account of operating costs and the effect on local rates, take account of the transport disadvantages Fares will be reviewed annually.	Medium Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

Ticketing

Ticketing for bus services must be simple, while also providing for a number of options for the different types of user (i.e. regular, casual, transport disadvantaged). Tickets should be available at appropriate locations, and also from the bus driver.

While a number of new technologies are available in terms of electronic ticketing, the low number of services likely to be established in the Tasman Region mean that the capital and ongoing cost of such systems are unlikely to be beneficial

Policy PT5	Ticketing A simple effective ticketing system.
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Activity	Delivery Timeframe	Contributes to GPS and RTMA Impacts														
		A	A	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b	c	d	e
		1	2	3	4											
Ensure that the ticketing system on both contracted and commercial routes is easy to understand, provides for a range of ticket options and that tickets are widely available.	Medium Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	

Marketing and Transport Information

Marketing activities can include promotion of public transport through advertising and communications material in which the benefits of public transport can be outlined as well as the issues which support its provision and use. The buses themselves can perform a significant contribution by self marketing simply with their presence and presentation on the streets they are serving, including having common livery or promotional advertising on and in the bus

Education activities can include teaching programmes at schools or general information sources that give information about the public transport system, for example how, where and when it operates, how much it costs (including relative price to other modes).

Accessible, concise and user friendly pre-journey information plays an important role in that it can influence an individual's transport mode choice. Information should be available from a variety of sources including, web-pages, council offices, public buildings and facilities, from tourism information centres, at bus stops and on the front of buses (the destination display).

Policy PT6	Marketing and Transport Information Public Transport Information that is easily available and encourages increased passenger transport use
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Activity	Delivery Timeframe	Contributes to GPS and RTMA Impacts														
		A	A	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	a	b	c	d	e
		1	2	3	4											
Encourage increased public transport use through marketing activities including promotion and education.	Medium Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Provide comprehensive route and timetable information through a range of channels. This will involve providing printed timetables and maps on the Councils website and at key bus stop locations	Short Term	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

3.4 Costs, Funding Sources and Procurement

3.4.1 Indicative Costs

Indicative cost estimations for services between Nelson and Richmond have been undertaken by Nelson City Council and are reported in their Passenger Transport Plan. This indicates that the total cost of providing a limited initial increase in services on the core route (Phase A) is around \$2-3 million per annum. After taking into consideration the NZTA subsidy and fare box revenue, the local share which would come from NCC and TDC is likely to be between \$0.9 million and \$1.3 million per annum.

If these services were to proceed to the next stage of investigation, further work is needed in this area to develop more accurate cost estimates and determine the percentage of this local share which would be funded by TDC.

In addition to this operating cost, the public transport system will need to be supported by an investment in infrastructure. Further work is also required in this area to determine likely costs.

3.4.2 Tasman Regional Land Transport Programme

The Tasman Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP) indicates a proposed expenditure programme on public transport services and infrastructure as shown in the table below. There is no National funding expected for Public Transport Infrastructure and funding for services will be provided wholly through Nelson District Council's allocation. The RLTP comments that amongst the potential projects, activities and issues of inter-regional significant for the Tasman District are Passenger Transport initiatives between Tasman District Council and Nelson City Council. It goes on to note that no firm decision has yet been made on the scope of any improvements, and as the Core Public Transport Corridor network improvements are being led by Nelson City Council, the funding application will be made through that Council and hence it is not prioritised in the Tasman District RLTP. Funding has been allocated towards improvements in the Tasman District Council's LTCCP, aligned to the table below.

Public Transport Services and Infrastructure - 10 year Forecast Expenditure

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
NZTA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TDC	0	0	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Total	0	0	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000

	3 year total	10 year total
NZTA	0	0
TDC	300,000	1,140,000
Total	300,000	1,140,000

The tables show that the indicative funding put aside for public transport services is likely to be less than that required under this PT Plan. Nevertheless, this forecast expenditure will be reviewed under the next Regional Land Transport Programme in early 2012 once the further investigations recommended in this plan are underway.

3.4.3 Funding Sources

Currently the main sources of funding for passenger transport are:

- user charges i.e. bus fare-box
- central government funding
- local government funding e.g. local rates, private sector contributions or other Council revenue streams (such as parking revenues)

Bus passengers provide a funding stream through the fare-box. There is no set minimum requirement for how much the fare-box should yield in proportion to overall service costs. However for smaller cities and regions a fare-box recovery of around 20% to 35% is typical. New bus services take a number of years for patronage to build momentum and achieve true potential; therefore it is normal for the fare box recovery to be relatively low during the first years of operation.

Central Government currently provide 50% funding assistance to Local Government on the net subsidies paid to bus operators, i.e. having firstly deducted the fare-box revenue. The remaining 50% (the local share) has to be met by Local Government. As some of the proposed passenger transport network is to operate across Local Government boundaries, negotiations with Nelson City Council will need to take place to determine the composition of local share.

The Ministry of Transport have recently (May 2009) published the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport Funding 2009/10 - 2018/19. This sets the range of national funding streams for transport activity classes. The indicative national funding allocations for the ten year period for passenger transport services are significantly greater than current funding levels, moving to \$185-215 million for 2009/10 and progressively rising. However for public transport infrastructure, the funding range is dropping significantly to \$20-100 million per year.

3.4.4 Procurement

All Councils procuring passenger transport services have to produce a Procurement Strategy. The strategy has to include an analysis of the market place, the Council's procurement philosophy and a host of detailed procurement procedures. Details such as contract type (i.e. gross cost, net price or other), contract length, contract size, quality and resilience of tender bidders, the tender evaluation methodology etc, are to be set out in the strategy.