



Part B: Regional Public Transport Plan 2024-2054

Consultation draft

September 2023

Taranaki Regional Council

Contents

List of figures	3
List of tables	3
1. Introduction	4
Background	4
Achievements since the last RPTP	4
Purpose	4
Better Travel Choices	5
2. Legislative, regulatory and policy framework	6
Introduction	6
Legislation	6
Regulatory system	6
Policy context	7
3. The public transport system in Taranaki	10
Bus services	10
Passenger numbers	13
Punctuality and reliability	16
Infrastructure	17
Fares	17
Information	18
4. Vision and strategic objectives for public transport	19
Vision	19
Strategic objectives	19
Strategic case for change	20
5. Strategic framework	28
Policies and potential initiatives	28
Key Performance Indicators and targets	30
Appendix A: Services integral to the public transport network	32
Appendix B: Unit establishment principles	34
Appendix C: Significance policy	36
Appendix D: Land Transport Management Act 2003 requirements	38

List of figures

Figure 1: Structure of Better Travel Choices for Taranaki	5
Figure 2: New Plymouth Citylink urban route map.....	11
Figure 3: Connector service and timetable.....	12
Figure 4: Summary of RPTP 2024 policies.....	20
Figure 5: Potential route changes in New Plymouth	22
Figure 6: Carbon and space footprint of different modes	25

List of tables

Table 1: Contribution of public transport system to GPS priorities.....	7
Table 2: RLTP 2024 problems, benefits and KPIs	8
Table 3: New Plymouth Citylink urban services	10
Table 4: Citylink school network.....	12
Table 5: Southlink services.....	13
Table 6: Taranaki region patronage and revenue comparison - March 2022 and March 2023	13
Table 7: Patronage on New Plymouth Citylink	14
Table 8: Citylink average passengers per journey (March 2023)	14
Table 9: Connector group of services	15
Table 10: Connector and Your Connector passenger numbers (March 2023)	16
Table 11: Southlink services and passenger journeys (March 2023)	16
Table 12: Base fare levels in 2023	17
Table 13: RPTP 2024 objectives and outcome statements.....	19
Table 14: Public transport network review proposals within existing budgets.....	21
Table 15: Potential future service improvements requiring additional investment	22
Table 16: Policies and potential initiatives for RPTP 2024	28
Table 17: Key Performance Indicators and proposed aspirational targets	30
Table 18: Public Transport Units - Current and future options.....	35
Table 19: Summary of how the RPTP delivers against the LTMA.....	38

1. Introduction

Background

The current Taranaki Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) was published in October 2020, seven months after the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic – an event which has changed the way that people think and feel about travel, and life in general.

As a result of COVID-19, public transport patronage across the country has suffered significantly and has yet to recover even to pre-pandemic levels. There may be no such thing as “returning to normal”; public transport now lives in a different world to which it will have to adapt.

There is cause for optimism, and also a compelling need to do better. The recent Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) consultation on transport reveals strong support for significant improvements to the public transport network, as a means of tackling a range of issues including access to jobs / education, social isolation, sustainable economic regeneration, and climate change. The current public transport mode share for journeys to work is very low, at less than 0.5%. In contrast, for journeys to school the figure is well over 10%, which is higher than the national average.

Achievements since the last RPTP

The 2020 RPTP was about consolidation in a highly uncertain world. The focus was very much on ensuring that people were able to travel safely and affordably. To that end, the Government introduced half price fares for all passengers between April 2022 and June 2023. This resulted in a significant boost to bus patronage – for example a 35% increase between March 2022 and March 2023.

The Government has now funded free fares for children under 13 years of age, and half price fares for adults up to the age of 24 and Community Services Card (CSC) holders. Bus travel has never been so affordable.

Demand for bus travel is driven strongly by children and young people accessing education, and TRC has been proactive by introducing additional urban school routes in New Plymouth and the Your Connector service from Hawera, Eltham, Stratford, and Inglewood into the city.

Compared to many parts of the country, local operators Tranzit, Pickerings and Weir Brothers have managed to provide sufficient numbers of drivers to keep services going to the current timetable. This achievement has enabled adverse impacts on patronage to be minimised.

Purpose

This 2024 RPTP is very much about looking forward with a renewed sense of ambition, and improving the Taranaki public transport network to meet the challenges of a world where single occupancy car travel – especially for shorter urban journeys – is reduced to meet our climate change obligations.

A statutory document under the *Land Transport Management Act* (LTMA), the purpose of the RPTP is to identify public transport services integral to the region’s network, and develop objectives, policies and actions which deliver improvements for passengers, both existing and future.

In Taranaki public transport services and infrastructure require significant improvement to meet the challenges of climate change. In many instances, bus services are an under-used resource which are primarily patronised by people who do not have access to a private car. Adult passenger numbers are generally low, compared with other modes of travel – especially the private car. Only school services are busy. Infrastructure – in the form of bus waiting facilities and on-road priority measures – is patchy in terms

of coverage and quality. The system is not consistently accessible to disabled people, which is a breach of United Nations charter commitments that Aotearoa New Zealand signed 15 years ago.

This RPTP intends to start the transformation of public transport into a modern, environmentally conscious, integrated, accessible, and customer-focused service which becomes the mode of choice for a range of utility and leisure travel, whether people have a car or not. Transformation starts by understanding the current strengths and weaknesses of the system, and making better use of available short-term investment. In the medium to longer term, the aim is to build further service frequency and capacity into the system, so that using public transport becomes convenient, intuitive, and excellent value for money. All this will be backed up with consistently high-quality infrastructure which will be the shop window for this modern system.

Better Travel Choices

The RPTP 2024 is part of the TRC “Better Travel Choices” initiative, which is integrating public transport planning with the wider context of mode shift to a range of shared and active travel modes. Better Travel Choices is structured as shown in Figure 1.

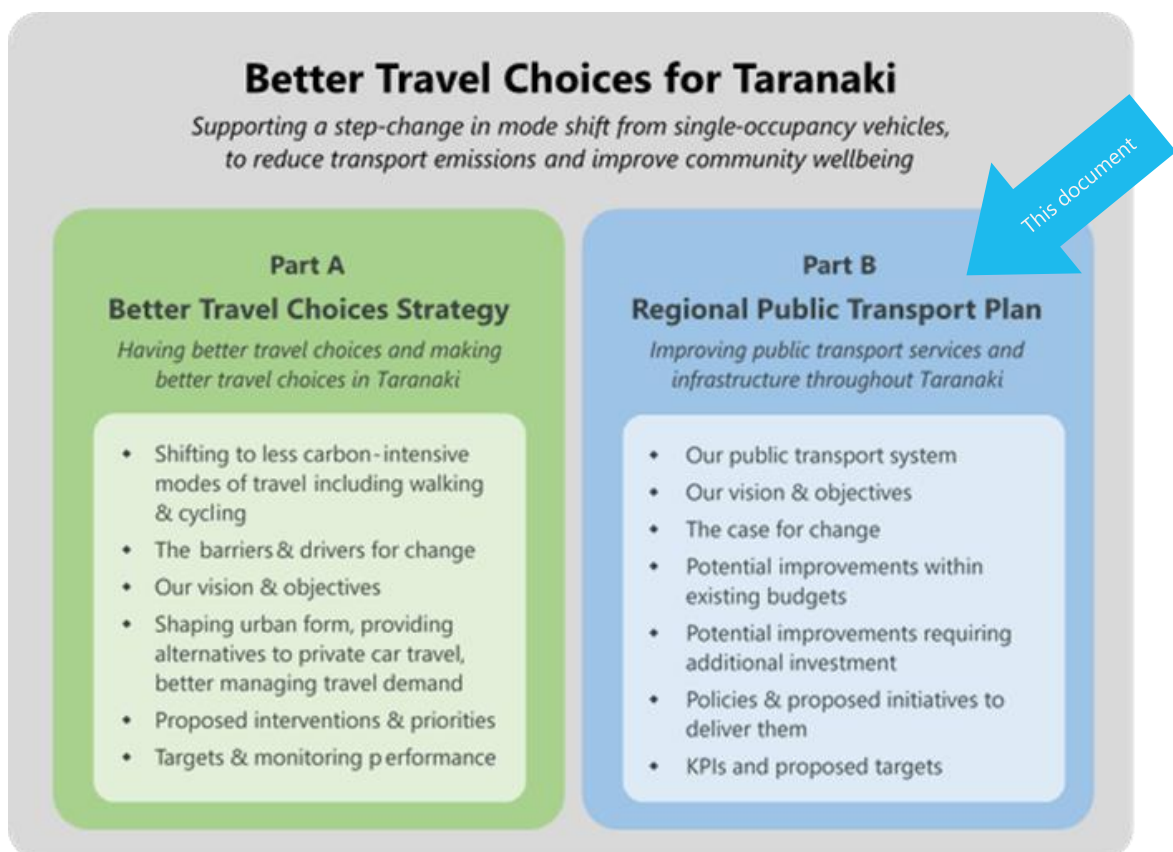


Figure 1: Structure of Better Travel Choices for Taranaki

Better Travel Choices is a 30-year strategy to change the way people travel in the region, promoting healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport.

Bus services in the region have changed little in over 15 years. If mode shift is to be realised, something different has to happen. The Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) is an integral part of Better Travel Choices and sets out a visionary ten-year strategy for bus-based mode shift, based on a clear understanding of target markets.

2. Legislative, regulatory and policy framework

Introduction

The RPTP exists within a legislative, regulatory and policy framework, and this section sets out the key requirements against which public transport must be planned and delivered.

Legislation

In section 117 of Land Transport Management Act (LTMA), the purpose of the RPTP is stated as being:

- a) A means for encouraging Regional Councils and public transport operators to work together in developing public transport services and infrastructure;
- b) An instrument for engaging with the public in the region on the design and operation of the public transport network; and
- c) A statement of:
 - i. The public transport services that are integral to the public transport network;
 - ii. The policies and procedures that apply to those services; and
 - iii. The information and infrastructure that support those services.

Section 126 of the LTMA states the RPTP must, at all times, be kept current for a period not less than three years in advance, but not more than ten years in advance. The Council may review the Plan from time to time but the Plan must be reviewed and, if necessary, renewed or varied, after the public transport service components of a RLTP are approved or varied.

Appendix D summarises how the RPTP delivers against the LTMA.

Regulatory system

The previous RPTP was prepared under the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM), a system for planning, procuring, and funding public transport, which aimed to increase patronage with less reliance on public subsidies, through improved collaboration between operators and Regional Councils.

Appendix B sets out the unit design principles. Services which do not form part of the core public transport network (outlined in Appendix A) are exempt from operating under contracts. This currently includes long distance services provided by Inter City.

PTOM has been replaced by the Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF), which is underpinned by new objectives prioritising mode-shift, fair and equitable treatment of employees, and improved environment and health outcomes. The basic structure of PTOM has been retained, whereby all bus services are divided into units and provided under contracts to TRC.

An amended LTMA will enable Regional Councils to operate public transport services in-house or to continue to outsource the operation of services to private operators. This change acknowledges that outsourcing of services to private operators may not always align with wider objectives for public transport services, for example, improving the terms and conditions of employees or accelerating the decarbonisation of the bus fleet. At this point in time, TRC is not looking to assume direct responsibility for a large number of services, but reserves the right to use its new powers if necessary.

The amended act will also establish a new requirement for public transport services to be planned, procured, and operated in an open and transparent manner - in relation to operating costs, service

performance, vehicles used to deliver services, aggregate employee terms and conditions, and financial performance of operators.

Regional and local councils are required to prepare RPTPs in collaboration with Territorial Authorities, in particular to identify the infrastructure (such as bus stops, hubs and priority measures) necessary to support public transport services.

Under the SPTF, the definition of public transport includes on-demand and shuttle services which do not run to a fixed schedule. Therefore Regional Councils are able to provide any form of passenger transport service through any mode, other than air transport, whether delivered to a timetable or not. Regional Councils can procure, contract, and deliver on-demand services separately to timetabled services, by amending the definition of a unit, and removing the requirement for every unit to be contracted on an exclusive basis.

“Exempt services”, which are not integral to the public transport network, include commercially operated buses, on-demand, and shuttles. Some exempt on-demand, and all exempt shuttle services, can be operated without being registered with TRC. A smaller subset of commercially operated passenger transport services will be subject to registration requirements - limited to those services more likely to affect public transport services provided by Regional Councils.

Inter-regional bus services, which cross a boundary between two Regional Councils, are no longer automatically classed as “exempt”, and treated the same as services within a region. Inter-regional services would only be automatically exempt if they are not identified as integral in an RPTP and operate without a subsidy, or if the regions that they operate between are not required to have RPTPs. Subsidised inter-regional services that are identified as integral in an RPTP would need to be provided in a specified unit.

Policy context

Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024/27

The draft Government Policy Statement (GPS) 2024/27 sets out the government’s desired outcomes and funding priorities for the land transport sector, and is the policy document that directly influences decisions on how funding from the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) is invested for the next three-year period.

Table 1 summarises how the public transport system contributes to the six draft GPS priorities.

Table 1: Contribution of public transport system to GPS priorities

Priority	Description	Contribution of Public Transport
Maintaining and operating the system	The condition of the existing transport system is maintained at a level that meets the current and future needs of users	Mode shift from private car to bus, and reduction in traffic volumes, can reduce wear and tear on the roading network and result in lower maintenance costs
Increasing resilience	The transport system is better able to cope with natural and anthropogenic hazards	In the event of disruption, public transport services provide a lifeline for people who do not have access to cars, and an alternative to people who do
Reducing emissions	Transitioning to a lower carbon transport system	If well-used, buses reduce levels of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) travelled per passenger kilometre, which can be further improved by using low or zero emission vehicles

Priority	Description	Contribution of Public Transport
Safety	To make transport substantially safer for all	Bus travel is a statistically safer mode than the private car, and so more people using public transport rather than cars can reduce the number of crashes
Sustainable urban and regional development	People can readily access social, cultural, and economic opportunities through a variety of transport options; in resilient and productive towns and cities that have a range of low-emission transport options and low congestion	Strong public transport corridors and destinations (such as town and city centres) enable housing, employment, and retail development to be clustered around highly accessible locations, thereby reducing the need to own and run a car
Integrated freight system	Improving freight connections for economic development	Buses can transport more people than cars per unit of road space, and can therefore help to reduce traffic congestion that can impact on reliable journey times for freight

Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP)

The 2024 Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) is currently in preparation, and Table 2 outlines the problems to be addressed and benefits to be delivered.

Table 2: RLTP 2024 problems, benefits and KPIs

Problem Statement (and weighting)	Benefit Statement (and weighting)	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
The network is built and operated favouring cars and when coupled with limited alternative options results in low levels of public transport, active modes, and rail use (40%)	Increased safe and connected active mode (walking, cycling and micro mobility) travel choices as well as reduced distances to services and amenities to achieve healthier communities (35%)	KPI 1: Transport related CO2 emissions KPI 2: Total vehicle kilometres travelled per capita KPI 3: Total kilometres of safe and connected separated cycleways and shared paths KPI 4: Percentage of active mode use for journey to work and school trips KPI 5: Local / regional trips average trip distance KPI 6: Transport system safety perceptions - customer surveys KPI 7: Deaths and serious injury crashes for active mode users
Dispersed urban development with limited access to local amenities, services and schools resulting in high car dependency, compounding inequitable access for lower socio-economic communities (35%)	Reduced reliance on private vehicles through increased use of public transport (40%)	KPI 1: Car ownership rates (Statistics NZ) KPI 2: Mode share for commuter trips for modes other than single occupancy vehicle KPI 3: Percentage of active mode and public transport use for journey to work and school trips KPI 4: Total public transport network coverage across region (kms or towns connected to network) KPI 5: Number of residents living within x km of high frequency public transport KPI 6: Average household spend on transport

Problem Statement (and weighting)	Benefit Statement (and weighting)	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
The condition of the region's primary roading network (including state highways and key local roads) is inconsistent, and in some parts poor, resulting in declining outcomes (increased operating costs and delays) for inter and intra-regional travel and freight, as well as declining safety for all road users (25%)	Safe, reliable, resilient, and efficient movement goods on road and rail	KPI 1: Deaths and serious injury crashes for all users KPI 2: Average journey times for freight between key destinations (road and rail) KPI 3: Vehicle operating costs on key routes KPI 4: Travel disruption Duration and frequency of unplanned closures KPI 5: Resilience Levels of Services for key routes KPI 6: Number and length of HPMV routes KPI 7: Throughput (tonnage) and % of freight movement by road and rail

The second problem and third benefit are specifically related to public transport, and therefore this RTP is the key policy document for delivering against those benefits and KPIs.

3. The public transport system in Taranaki

Before any changes to public transport services can take place, there is a need to understand what currently exists, and how it is performing. This section therefore provides a comprehensive overview of the current public transport system in Taranaki Region.

Bus services

Types of Service

Public transport services funded by TRC are currently divided into four types:

- **New Plymouth:** Citylink and school services;
- **Regional Connector:** services from Ōpunake, Hāwera and Stratford to New Plymouth;
- **Rural Southlink:** covering routes in South Taranaki district; and
- **Total Mobility:** for disabled people who are not able to use conventional public transport.

Appendix A lists all current services which are integral to the public transport network.

In addition there are:

- Extensive rural school services funded directly by Ministry of Education (MoE);
- Community transport services run by local charities such as the Ironside Society;
- Long-distance coach services to Auckland and Wellington operated by Inter City.

New Plymouth

Ten New Plymouth Citylink urban services operate Monday to Friday until around 6pm, with two Saturday routes which follow a different circular route around the city. There is currently no Sunday or Public Holiday service. Table 3 summarises the Citylink urban services:

Table 3: New Plymouth Citylink urban services

Service number	Route	Number of services per day
1	City Centre - Moturoa	14
2	City Centre - Whalers Gate	14
3	City Centre - Lynmouth - Marfell	14
4	City Centre - Westown - Hurdon	14
5	City Centre - Frankleigh Park - Ferndale	14
6	City Centre - Vogeltown - Brooklands	14
7	City Centre - Welbourn - Highlands Park	14
8	City Centre - Merrilands - Highlands Park	14
9	City Centre - The Valley - Glen Avon	14
10	Western loop of city – Saturday only	2
11	Eastern loop of city – Saturday only	2
20	City Centre - Bell Block - Waitara	6

The current New Plymouth urban network has been largely unchanged for nearly 15 years. As shown in Figure 2, services 1 to 9 depart from the Ariki Street central hub, and then fan out across the different suburbs before returning around 30-35 minutes later. Services 1 to 9 run as a “pulse” timetable, where they

all depart at same time and run to an identical frequency. Service 20 is a longer but less frequent route to the satellite settlements of Bell Block and Waitara.

Citylink service weekday frequencies are variable, with anything between 30- and 85-minute gaps between departures at different times of day. Long gaps in the service restrict choice, fail to make best use of available resources, and do not provide a good product which is easily understood by passengers. The number of people who transfer between services in the city centre is relatively small, which means that most passengers do not currently use buses to undertake suburb to suburb trips.

Saturday services 10 and 11 (shown by the red and black dotted lines on the map) perform two very long one-way loops around the western and eastern halves of the city respectively.

TRC is aware the network has idiosyncrasies and needs an overhaul. Examples are where some services use different roads in opposite directions along the route, creating long one-way loops which result in slow journey times, as passengers often have to travel in the opposite direction to get to where they want to go. On service 3 the route runs to different patterns before and after 10.00am, which can cause confusion.

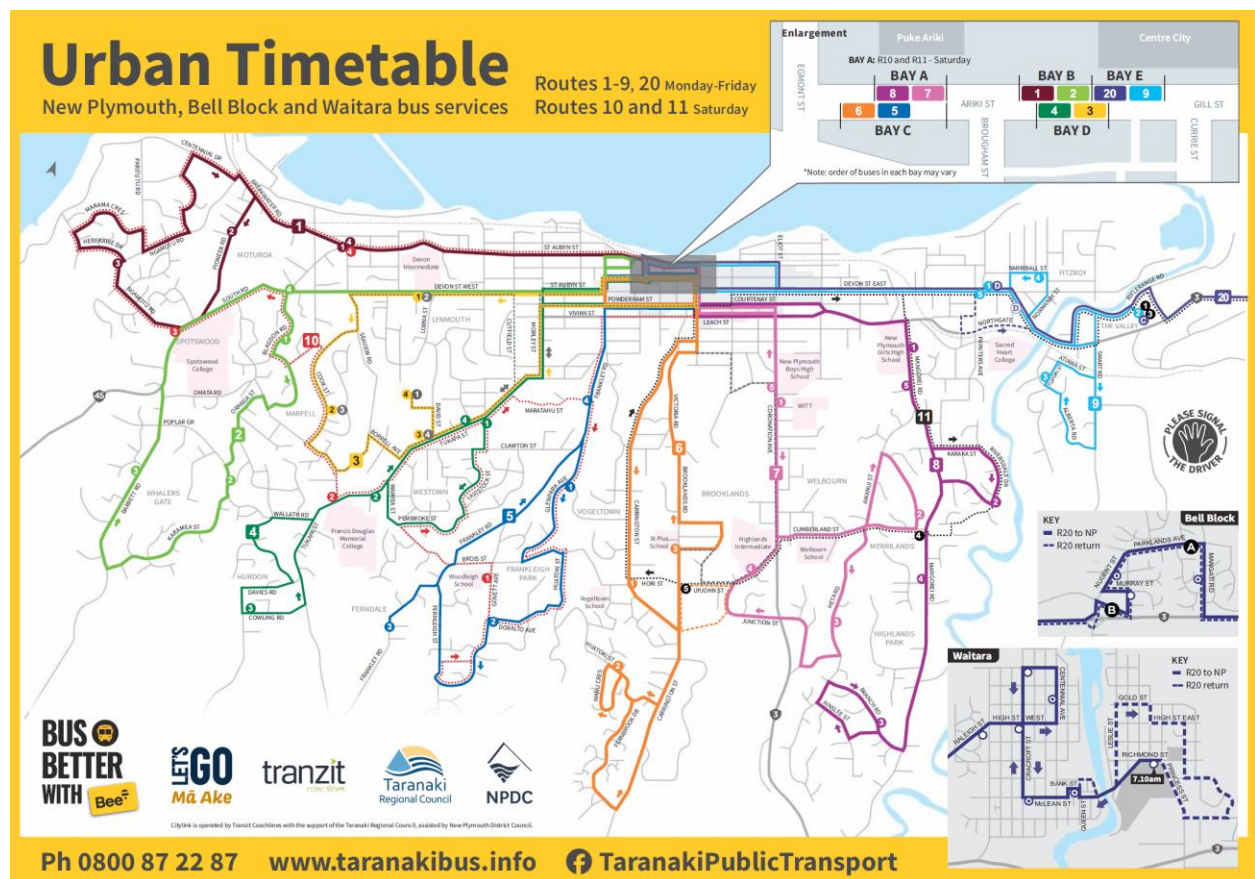


Figure 2: New Plymouth Citylink urban route map

The Citylink school network comprises a total of 27 individual services as shown in Table 4. A complete list is shown in Appendix A. Each service performs one weekday morning and one afternoon journey in school term time only. In between operating times, school buses are not being utilised as well as they could be.

Table 4: Citylink school network

Service Numbers	Area(s) Served
12	Merrilands to Spotswood College, via New Plymouth Boys High School and Devon Intermediate
21-24	Waitara / Urenui / Motunui / Tikorangi / Lepperton to various schools
21 and 30-34	Bell Block to various schools
40 and 42-45	Oākura to various schools
41	Omata to Highlands Intermediate
Orbiters 51 to 54	Clockwise and anticlockwise services linking all New Plymouth secondary and intermediate schools
91-93 and 95	Direct, afternoon-only services from New Plymouth Girls High School, New Plymouth Boys High School, Sacred Heart, and Highlands Intermediate to the Ariki Street Bus Centre
98	Inglewood High School

Passenger numbers show that school services are well loaded, with standing or additional buses required in some cases.

Connector

Introduced in 2014, the Opunake / Hawera to New Plymouth Connector service links a series of townships four times per day in each direction along State Highway 3, as shown in Figure 3.

The current Connector service pattern has loops being operated at both ends of the route, in different directions at different times of day and this arrangement can be confusing for new users. At the Hawera end, one journey each way per day is extended to / from Opunake.

Connector also features two school services – branded “Your Connector” which travel from Hawera to various schools in New Plymouth in the morning, and the return again in the afternoon.

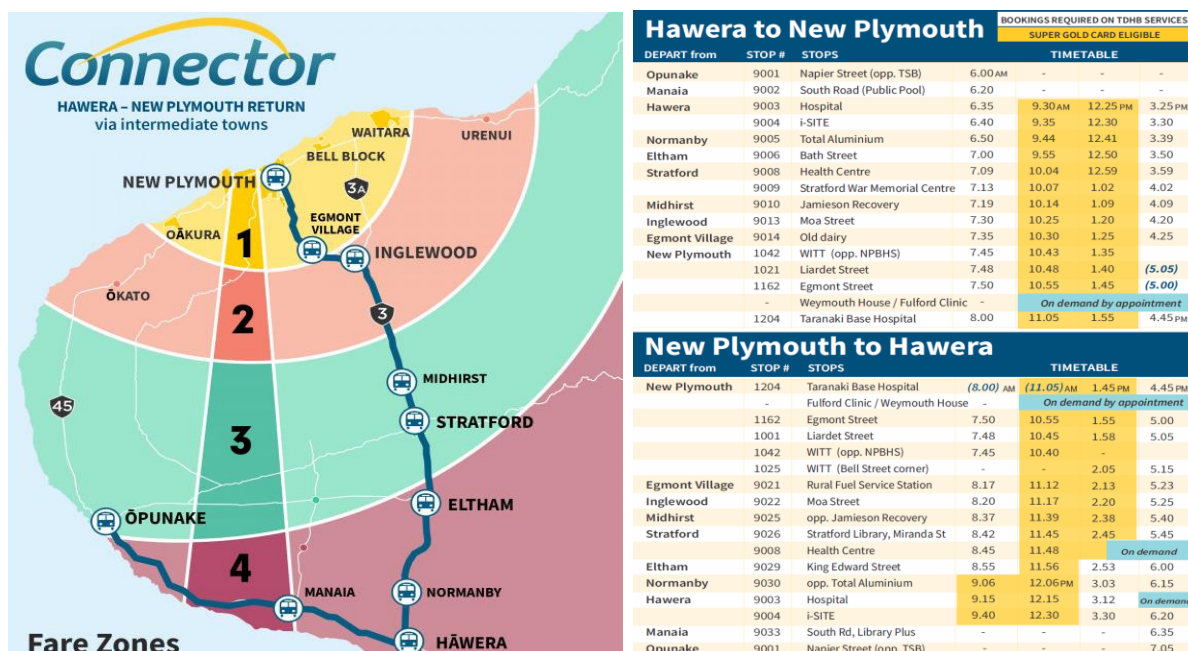


Figure 3: Connector service and timetable

Connector is an increasingly popular option, especially for students travelling into New Plymouth.

Southlink

South Taranaki is served by three Southlink services, as summarised in Table 5:

Table 5: Southlink services

Service	Frequency
Ōpunake – Kaponga - Manaia – Ohawe (on-demand) - Hāwera	One return journey per week (Thursday only)
Waverley – Pātea - Hāwera	Two return journeys per week (Tuesday and Thursday only)
Ōpunake – Oākura – New Plymouth	One return journey per week (Friday only)

These services provide a very basic access option for people who have no other choice of travel mode.

Passenger numbers

Regional Picture

The region's public transport network has withstood challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and driver shortages relatively well, with the main dip in passenger numbers being in financial year 2021/22.

There has been considerable growth in passenger journey numbers when comparing March 2022 with March 2023 (March is the busiest month of the year). The March 2022 figure is likely to be lower than normal because of COVID-19 pandemic impact. Therefore growth in the year to March 2023 will be partly the result of more people having the confidence to return to public transport.

Passenger growth will also be partly the result of the Government half price fare scheme, introduced in April 2022. Inevitably passenger growth has been accompanied by a sizeable (34%) reduction in farebox revenue. Table 6 compares key performance metrics for the months of March 2022 and March 2023.

Table 6: Taranaki region patronage and revenue comparison - March 2022 and March 2023

Performance Metric	March 2022	March 2023	Change (%) *
Total number of passenger journeys	60,928	82,447	+35
Total farebox revenue (\$)	161,510	106,952	-34
Total number of adult passenger journeys	8,894	17,131	+93
Total number of child passenger journeys	42,246	49,938	+18
Total number of Super Gold passenger journeys	3,800	4,731	+25

* Percentage changes rounded up to nearest whole number.

An assessment of changes by type of route (i.e. urban versus schools) show that passenger increases and fare revenue decreases between March 2022 and March 2023 have been:

- 54% increase in passengers on urban services, with a 32% decrease in revenue; and
- 16% increase in passengers on school services, with a 42% decrease in revenue.

School route passenger trips have increased by a smaller percentage as they were already well used. The revenue decrease is greater on school routes as there were previously larger numbers of child passengers paying a full fare.

The passenger and revenue figures between March 2022 and March 2023 for the Connector Connector group of routes are influenced by the introduction of the Your Connector services between the two dates. This means that additional patronage is at least partly the result of additional services being introduced.

New Plymouth Citylink

Table 7 summarises the annual number of passengers on the Citylink network for the last five financial years.

Table 7: Patronage on New Plymouth Citylink

Financial year	Number of passengers	Change from previous year (%)
2018/19	211,591	-
2019/20	239,396	+13
2020/21	240,765	<+1
2021/22	219,709	-9
2022/23	296,390	+35

Passenger numbers increased by 40% between 2018/19 and 2022/23, with most of that being between 2021/22 and 2023/23 (again reflecting impact of the Government half price fare policy). It is possible that passenger numbers may reduce following the end of universal half price fares, although various concessions will remain.

Looking back to the previous years, another notable feature is that the "COVID-19 years" of 2019/20 and 2020/21 actually show a patronage increase on 2018/19 (the last full year before the pandemic). Furthermore, the 2021/22 financial year shows a decline back to 2018/19 levels before the Government half price fare policy was introduced.

Table 8 depicts variable passenger numbers on each service, both in total and average load per journey. The busiest weekday service is the number 20 from Waitara and Bell Block. The quietest weekday service is the number 5 to Frankleigh Park. Services 10 and 11 run on Saturdays only, two round journeys per day, which means the total number of services is much lower than the weekday routes.

Table 8: Citylink average passengers per journey (March 2023)

Service	Total passengers	Average passengers per journey	Rank by total passengers
1	3,361	10.91	4
2	3,838	12.46	3
3	2,643	8.58	7
4	4,065	13.20	2
5	1,801	5.85	10
6	3,054	9.92	6
7	2,583	8.39	8
8	3,386	10.99	5
9	2,391	7.76	9

Service	Total passengers	Average passengers per journey	Rank by total passengers
10	101	12.63	11
11	85	10.63	12
20	4,154	15.73	1
All	31,462	10.31	-

An average load of just over ten passengers per trip, with some routes showing lower performance than this, is not a satisfactory situation given that the buses can accommodate around 50 people at any one time. Significantly increasing the number of bus passengers has potential to remove car trips from the road network, and contribute towards both reducing congestion and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

This RPTP proposes actions which aim to deliver a short-term increase in bus patronage of at least 25% over current levels - based on immediate improvements to services that can be accommodated within existing budgets. From the start of the next contract in mid-2025, significant improvements are proposed for service frequency, time of day / week coverage and available destinations across the city. Depending on conclusions of a business case, target increases in patronage could be between 200% and 300% over the next ten years.

New Plymouth Schools

In contrast to the Citylink network, school services are well-used. In March 2023, the network – which comprises 27 routes each running no more than one return journey every school day – carried 42,697 passengers (over 11,000 more than the twelve Citylink urban routes, which have over 60% more bus journeys).

For all New Plymouth school routes the average number of passengers per journey is just under 40. This is four times higher than the average for Citylink urban routes. The next contract provides an opportunity to review how school and urban services could better work together, and make more efficient use of resources. This could include encouraging more students to use urban services to get to school, reducing the large Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) for operation as a whole.

Children and young people embrace the bus, and the challenge is to enable them to continue using public transport as they get into adulthood.

Connector

Connector is the region's main inter-town service, running from Hāwera to New Plymouth along State Highway 3. Table 9 summarises the services currently provided:

Table 9: Connector group of services

Service	Details
Connector	Four return trips (two morning and two afternoon) per weekday: Hāwera – Eltham – Stratford – Inglewood – New Plymouth (both city centre and Base Hospital) First and last single trip is extended to / from Ōpunake
Your Connector	Two weekday morning outbound trips (school days only) from Hāwera, one to New Plymouth Boys High School and one to New Plymouth High Girls School; returning in the afternoon Two daily journeys are for Dialog employees

Table 10 summarises passenger numbers in March 2023 for the Connector group of services.

Table 10: Connector and Your Connector passenger numbers (March 2023)

Service	Total Passengers	Average Passengers per Journey
Connector	3,036	17.25
Your Connector (Dialog)	514	9.73
Your Connector (School / College)	4,396	49.95
All	8,288	23.55

The Your Connector routes – predominantly used by school and college students – have very high numbers, and the operator is now providing additional vehicles because of overcrowding. The Connector has a higher average passengers per journey than any Citylink urban service, albeit spread over a long route.

Connector supports a relatively high number of passengers for the relatively low level of frequency, which indicates significant potential for further service improvement both on weekdays, and possibly weekends.

Southlink

The rural Southlink services are made of up three routes:

- **Ōpunake - Kaponga - Manaia - Hāwera** (serves Ohawe on-demand): one return journey on Thursdays only;
- **Waverley - Pātea - Hāwera**: one return journey on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and
- **Ōpunake - Okato - Oakura** - New Plymouth city centre – The Valley Megacentre: one return journey on Fridays only.

The three services all carry small numbers of passengers. Table 11 shows the figures for March 2023.

Table 11: Southlink services and passenger journeys (March 2023)

Service	Number of service journeys	Number of passenger journeys	Average number of passengers per journey
Opunake – New Plymouth	10	130	13.00
Opunake – Hawera	10	42	4.20
Waverley - Hawera	18	119	6.61
All	38	291	7.66

Southlink only carries a small number of passengers, which results in a high subsidy per journey. However, for the people who use it the service is priceless. This RPTP will set out how TRC intends to improve the provision of rural transport services across the region, and drive better service provision for passengers as well as value for money.

Punctuality and reliability

Citylink routes in New Plymouth are currently able to complete their journeys and arrive back in time for the start of the next service. However, increasing levels of traffic congestion on State Highway 3 between New Plymouth, Bell Block and Waitara are starting to impact on journey speeds, with the potential to result in

punctuality challenges. Another challenge is the presence of roadworks, which can result in detours that add time on to the schedule.

The New Plymouth Integrated Transport Framework recognises this situation and forecasts that this congestion will get worse in future. Therefore bus priority in the form of traffic signal detection and dedicated lanes may be required in future.

The Connector appears to have insufficient time for the buses to complete their journeys on time because of over-ambitious scheduling. This situation can be rectified by adjusting service timetables and speeding up services through considering re-location of bus stops in the main towns – Inglewood, Stratford, and Eltham – to the State Highway. This latter action will reduce diversions on to side streets and bring passengers closer to where they want to be.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure covers the physical assets such as bus stops and interchanges (hubs) as well as any on-road bus priority (which is addressed above).

Bus stops are the responsibility of the relevant Territorial Authority. Each stop should include a sign and yellow box road markings as a minimum, with shelters to provide passenger protection from the elements (both rain and sun) highly desirable.

New Plymouth District Council and TRC have a constructive and collaborative working relationship which focuses on improving communities' access to public transport with the development of a working party for bus shelter maintenance and infrastructure. Most bus stops have standard facilities consisting of a sign, road markings, shelter, and timetable case.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency has produced bus stop design guidance which will be used to identify locations where improvements to passenger access and facilities are required.

Fares

Base levels of adult and child bus fares across the region have remained the same over the last seven years, which means that with the effect of inflation they have become significantly cheaper over time.

Table 12 sets out the current base adult fare levels in Taranaki, and concession rates for children (0-12 years of age), youths (13-24 years of age) and Super Gold card holders. With the exception of WITT students, concessionary fares only apply to people who have a registered Bee Card.

Table 12: Base fare levels in 2023

Fare type	Payment	1 Zone (\$)	2 Zone (\$)	3 Zone (\$)	4 Zone (\$)
Adult (Over 24 years of age)	Cash	3	4	5	6
	Bee Card	2	3	4	5
Child (5 to 12 years of age)	Cash	0	0	0	0
	Bee Card	0	0	0	0
Youth (13-24 years of age)	Cash	3	4	5	6
	Bee Card	1.50	2	2.50	3
Super Gold Card (off-peak travel only*)	Bee Card	1.50	2	2.50	3
Community Services Card	Bee Card	1.50	2	2.50	3

Fare type	Payment	1 Zone (\$)	2 Zone (\$)	3 Zone (\$)	4 Zone (\$)
WITT Students	Student ID	0	0	0	0

* For adults over 65 years of age. Half fare concession applies between 9am to 3pm and after 6pm weekdays, and all-day Saturdays. At other times the full adult fare is paid.

Total Mobility customers receive a 75% discount on their one-way subsidised taxi fare. Taranaki has a \$40 cap per trip, so the maximum contribution TRC provides per one way trip is currently \$30. Any cost beyond that level is met fully by the passenger.

Information

TRC provides a mix of paper and online information on bus services.

Paper information consists of individual route timetables and maps for public buses, along with a summary map of the urban services in New Plymouth city. A useful aspect of the individual route maps in New Plymouth is that they show stop and shelter locations. Timetables have other information such as fare zones, Bee Card operation, customer etiquette and how to use the bus, which is important for people who are not regular users of public transport.

A refresh of timetables will create a common and user-friendly format and address current issues such as timings which are referred to in the leaflet as “approximate” (with the exception of the start of each route). Therefore new timetables will set realistic intermediate timing points. Differences in format between the timetables of the Connector and Citylink services will also be rectified.

The online offering – at [Buses & Transport / Taranaki Regional Council \(trc.govt.nz\)](https://trc.govt.nz) – provides comprehensive information on urban / school services, Total Mobility timetables, fares / concessions, new updates, and other essential information such as lost property. Real-time tracking is provided by the Transit app, based on data feeds provided by TRC and the operators.

The transport planning page of the web site contains the current RPTP and RLTP. There is currently no information on key performance metrics for the public transport service, including:

- Total public transport boardings;
- Passenger kilometres travelled;
- Proportion of residents within 500 metres walk of a stop on the rapid and frequent service network;
- Patronage growth on all bus services;
- Service improvements delivered to schedule within agreed budgets;
- Customer satisfaction ratings for public transport services;
- Customer rating of public transport value for money;
- Reliability: very late running and cancelled services;
- Punctuality: proportion of services “on time” (i.e. percentage of scheduled trips between 59 seconds before, and four minutes and 59 seconds after, scheduled departure time at the selected points);
- Proportion of services with disability access;
- Operating subsidy per passenger kilometres; and
- Farebox recovery ratio.

The amended LTMA will require this information to be published and regularly updated.

4. Vision and strategic objectives for public transport

Vision

Developed with assistance from a stakeholder workshop, the vision for public transport in the Taranaki region is as follows:

An accessible, integrated and customer-focused public transport system that enhances community wellbeing and environment, and becomes the preferred mode of transport within and between urban areas.

Strategic objectives

There are six strategic objectives and outcome statements which contribute to the vision:

Table 13: RPTP 2024 objectives and outcome statements

Objective	Outcome statement
Deliver mode shift from car to bus.	Provide frequent, reliable, and punctual urban and inter-urban public transport networks that attract new customers and retain existing ones.
Improve public transport accessibility and equity.	Provide safe and accessible public transport services and infrastructure that supports an efficient and connected transport network, and multi-modal travel.
Improve customer experience of the public transport system.	Provide high quality information and branding that enables passengers to easily understand and navigate services.
Improve environmental and economic performance.	Contribute to reductions in carbon emissions from transport, improved air quality and reduced traffic congestion through mode shift to public transport and decarbonising the bus fleet.
Deliver affordable and value for money services.	Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.
Manage service improvements optimally.	Undertake an approach to planning, procurement and monitoring of services that supports the efficient and effective delivery of services while providing good value for money.

These form the basis of policies and initiatives which aim to deliver a system transformation for public transport. These policies are summarised in Figure 4, and detailed in Section 5.

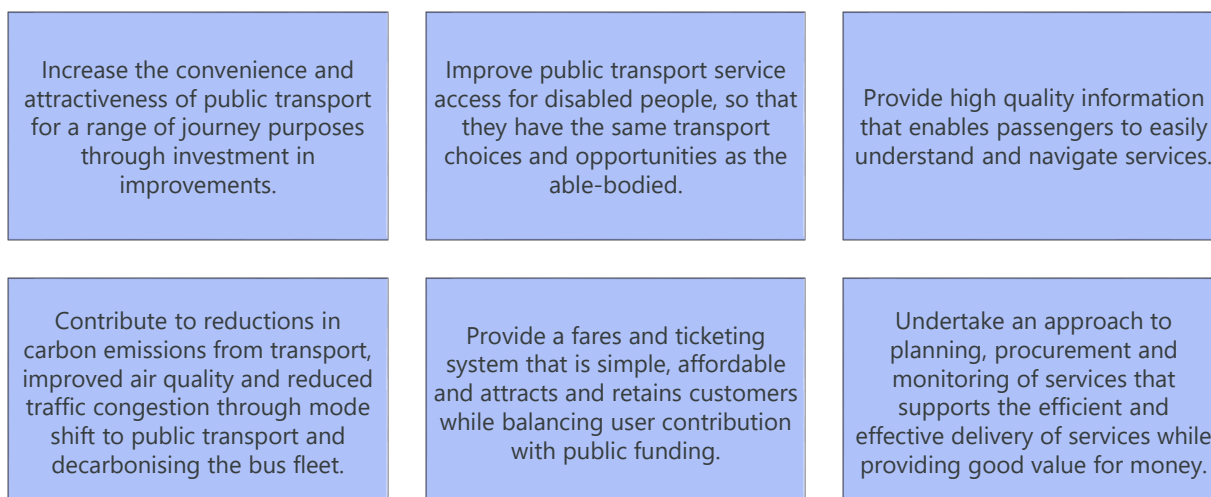


Figure 4: Summary of RPTP 2024 policies

This RPTP strongly supports key government objectives around reducing carbon emissions, increasing resilience improving accessibility, and promoting safety. By reducing traffic levels and congestion, investing in public transport can also benefit people and businesses for whom car, van and truck use is essential.

Strategic case for change

Mode shift from car to bus

Mode share for local bus services is currently low – less than 1% of work trips across the region. If the bus is to play a genuine role in mode shift, services must become much more attractive for people who have a choice of driving a car, and this will expand demand for services which benefit everyone.

Evidence from around the world, including Aotearoa New Zealand, demonstrates that people will use bus systems which are:

- **Accessible:** with high quality bus stops located close to where people live;
- **Intuitive:** with direct routes and good levels of information throughout the journey;
- **Frequent:** every 20 minutes or less in urban areas, and hourly on longer distance inter-urban routes;
- **Efficient:** taking the most direct route to minimise in-vehicle journey time;
- **Punctual and reliable:** services which turn up and arrive on time, day in day out;
- **Modern:** equipped with comfortable seats and wifi, with an excellent ride quality;
- **Safe and secure:** with skilled drivers who look after their customers’ needs; and
- **Value for money:** with fares that compare favourably with the cost of parking.

After frequency and direct routes, bus service punctuality (turning up on time) and reliability (turning up at all) are the most significant factors to attract or dissuade use. Therefore the Taranaki service will aspire to be on time, every time.

New Plymouth Citylink services are generally punctual and reliable and, whilst traffic levels are growing, levels of congestion are at a point where serious delays occur over an extended period of time period of time. However, if traffic levels continue to increase bus services, which cannot avoid congestion by changing their route, could become adversely affected.

TRC is aware that Connector services suffer from poor punctuality because current timetables are not realistic and in need of updating.

TRC has undertaken a review of the public transport network, to assess potential service improvements within existing budgets and therefore to provide a firm foundation for improvements as part of the next contract. Table 14 summarises changes that could be implemented within existing budgets.

Table 14: Public transport network review proposals within existing budgets

Service Area	Possible Changes
New Plymouth Citylink routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-routing and combining services to make better use of available resources (see Figure 4.2 below). • Cross-city route between Waitara, Bell Block, The Valley, city centre and hospital. • Withdrawal of Saturday routes 10 and 11, and replacement with services on routes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 20.
New Plymouth Citylink timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly weekday clockface timetable from 7am to 6pm on routes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9. • Six weekday return journeys per day on service 5. • Hourly weekday service 20 from city centre to The Valley, with alternate journeys going to Bell Block and Waitara. • Six Saturday return journeys on routes 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9.
Connector route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses routed via New Plymouth city centre before hospital. • Change to route in Hāwera to provide a local service (serving the town centre in both directions).
Connector timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor timetable changes to improve punctuality.
Your Connector route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of services to New Plymouth city centre. • Withdrawal of Dialog service.
Southlink route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of services terminating at Hāwera town centre to the hospital.
Southlink timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a transfer at Hāwera with the Thursday Connector service to New Plymouth.

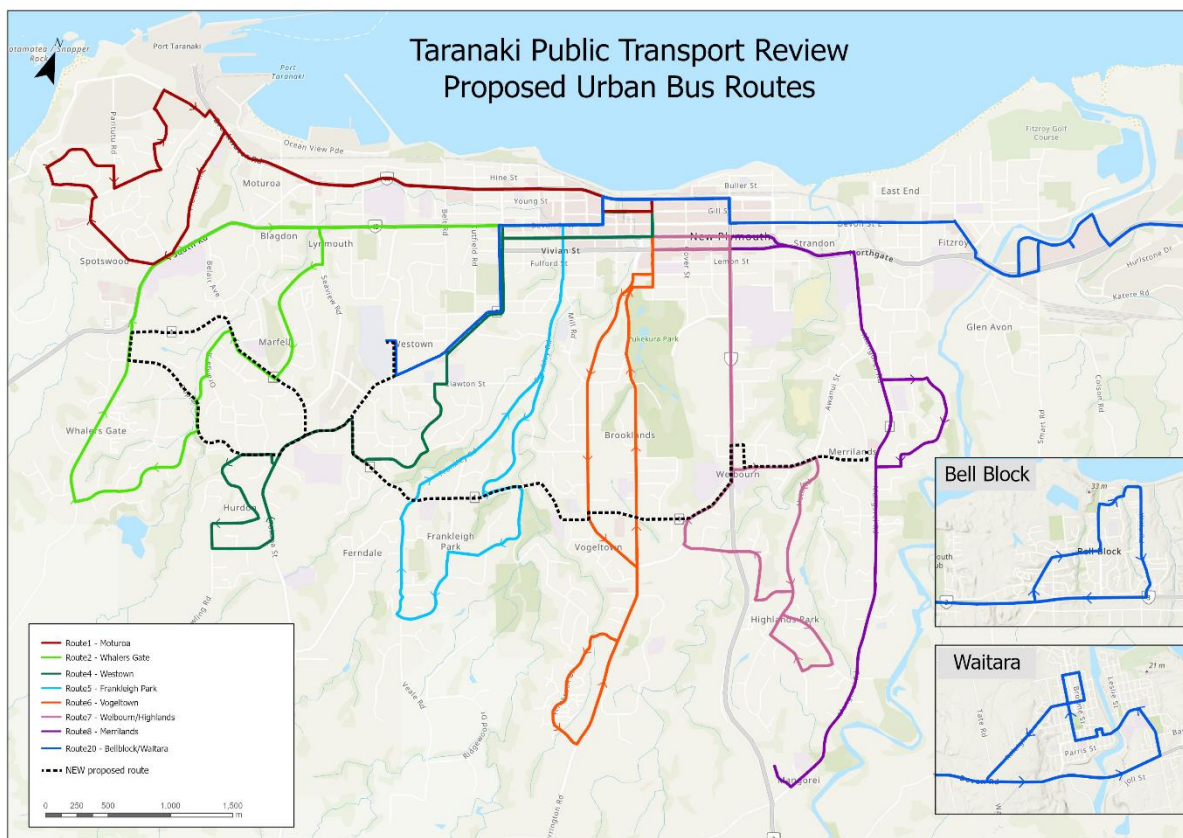


Figure 5: Potential route changes in New Plymouth

Table 15 outlines number of other potential improvements that could be funded through additional investment, possibly on a trial basis.

Table 15: Potential future service improvements requiring additional investment

Service	Potential Improvement
New Plymouth Citylink	Increase weekday urban services to half-hourly.
	More through routes that provide cross-city travel.
	Greater range of journey possibilities through convenient transfer at city centre or local hubs.
	Extend urban weekday services into the evenings.
	Improve Saturday service frequency.
	Introduce Sunday and Public Holiday services.
	Increase the number of cross-city services which avoid the city centre.
	Introduce express service from Waitara.
	Introduce airport service.
New Plymouth Schools	Review of provision to increase capacity.
	Better integration with more frequent urban services.

Service	Potential Improvement
Connector	Increase weekday service to hourly, and extend operating hours later in the day.
	Introduce weekend and public holiday services.
Southlink.	Higher frequency services around the coast.
Inter-regional.	Introduce service to Whanganui and Palmerston North

All service improvement proposals will be assessed and prioritised through a business case. Proposals which are deemed to be value for money and affordable through TRC budgets will be implemented as part of new service contracts in 2025.

Accessibility and equity

It is recognised that support is needed for people who cannot use public transport to travel, all or some of the time, due to disability as a result of physical or mental impairment.

An impairment may prevent people from having the confidence to travel at all, getting to a public bus stop, getting onto the bus, riding safely and securely, getting off the bus or getting to their final destination. Most modern buses are well-designed for physically disabled people, as they can kneel to the kerb for level boarding and have space for accommodation of wheelchairs.

Key provisions are in relation to:

- Personal choice for disabled people that is no different to the able-bodied;
- Designing services and information that give confidence to people with conditions such as autism and anxiety; and
- Affordability of service provision for people who are on limited budgets.

Total Mobility services provide an option for disabled people who cannot use standard buses, with staff who are trained to deal with the needs of their customers. There is a 75% subsidy for the first \$40, with any remaining fare over that amount paid for by the passenger.

For conventional public transport, there can be no discrimination against people because of their disability, which means that vehicles on TRC funded services must comply with disability access standards. Although urban bus services are compliant with Requirement for Urban Buses (RUB) provisions, Connector and Southlink are not required to meet the same standards. This results in a difference between accessibility of urban and rural buses which is increasingly hard to justify when disabled people should be treated equally. Addressing this issue will require either variations to existing Connector and Southlink contracts, or introduction of fully accessible vehicles as part of new contracts.

The other major challenge for disabled people, and those with temporary mobility impairments, is access to and from bus stops. Many stops, and routes getting to / from them, are not compliant with modern accessibility design standards including:

- Shelters, with sufficient waiting space away from the footpath;
- Optimum height hand standing for level boarding;
- Safe crossing points close to the stop;
- Tactile paving for blind / partially sighted people; and
- Dropped kerbs for wheelchairs / mobility aids.

A full bus stop location, passenger facility and accessibility audit will enable current challenges and priorities for improvement to be identified.

Customer experience

For occasional and new public transport system users in particular, advance journey planning is an important feature of making services more accessible and intuitive. Even for regular users, the ability to learn of issues such as service disruption in advance of commencing a journey is very important.

The Transit app went live in November 2022 and is currently able to provide real time information from the TRC General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS).

A more sophisticated approach to provision of advance journey planning would encompass enhancements such as:

- Real-time accurate information on service punctuality and availability;
- Real-time capacity to facilitate social distancing for people with concerns around COVID-19;
- Real-time disruption information before arrival at the station or stop;
- Guaranteed transfer connections between services; and
- Journey planning tools that allow more variables or preferences, such as choice of different modes or routes.

The format of timetable information in Taranaki is inconsistent. For example the New Plymouth urban bus timetables are laid out differently to Connector, with times being read across the page rather than down. Timetables refer to timing points, other than the first departure, as "approximate". Timetables must be kept regularly updated.

Once passengers have made their journey planning choice, the importance of information during the whole journey does not diminish. For occasional and new users in particular, information provision is essential for providing confidence to use what may be an unfamiliar system.

Key requirements for customers include:

- High visibility of the bus stop;
- Appropriate wayfinding and signage to / from the stop;
- Static and real-time information provided at the stop; and
- Information on-board the bus in relation to the end destination, and each stop along the route.

It should be easy for anyone to communicate with a bus operator and the council. Full contact information should be available at stops, on board the bus, on apps and online.

Accurate and easy-to-follow timetables should be available and accessible at bus stops, stations, in public buildings, online and via apps. Timetables should be clearly displayed so they can be seen by wheelchair users and, where possible, there should be real-time audio-visual announcements and use of braille.

Proper notice should be given of any planned changes to services or routes with notices on buses and at stops, in the local press, on radio, on social media and via apps. Drivers should also communicate changes directly to passengers, particularly regular users.

At present bus stops in Taranaki have limited public profile, sometimes limited to the standard legal sign affixed to a lamp post or telegraph pole. Stops with shelters are more visible. There are few, if any signs, to direct people to their local bus stop or interchanges. Provision of printed timetable information is generally reasonable in New Plymouth, and real-time information has commenced. Buses are currently not set up to provide in-vehicle announcements or information on screens.

Environmental and economic performance

From July 2025, the Government has mandated that no new diesel vehicles can be introduced into local bus contracts. From July 2035, all buses on TRC contracts must be zero emission.

The current diesel bus fleet in Taranaki makes only a very small contribution to total levels of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. However TRC continues to investigate options for delivering a lower public transport carbon footprint such as an increase level of mode share, electric and / or hydrogen fleets.

Increasing mode share of public transport at the expense of the private car is one of the most effective ways of reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Walking, cycling and public transport trips are inherently more efficient travel modes as they take up less space on roads and increase the movement of people without increasing the number of vehicles, as well as extending the life and reducing maintenance cost of existing infrastructure. Figure 6 shows the carbon footprint of different transport modes, along with the amount of road space required for each vehicle occupant, in the state of Victoria in Australia.

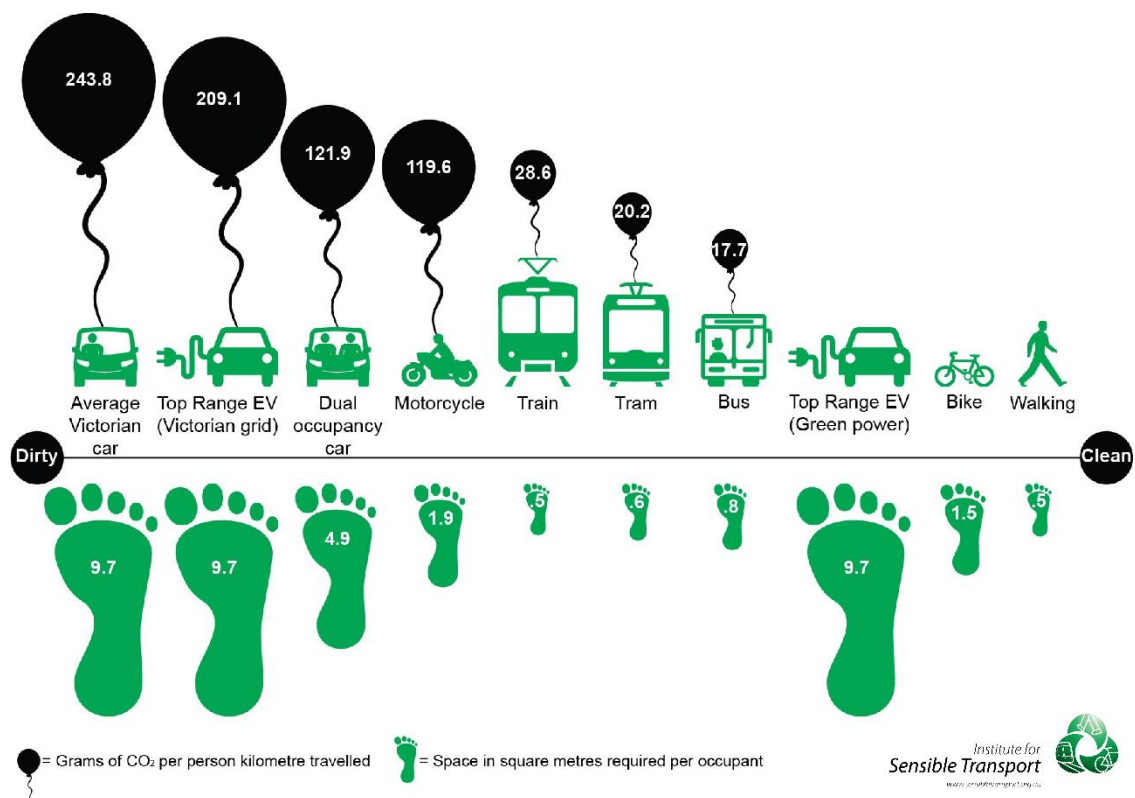


Figure 6: Carbon and space footprint of different modes

TRC therefore intends to deliver mode shift primarily through improving service coverage and frequency so that public transport becomes a compelling alternative to the private car. The next service contract in July 2025 will be let using modern diesel buses, which have superior environmental performance to older models.

TRC will introduce Zero Emission Buses in advance of the 2035 deadline, when there are technology and funding opportunities / incentives to do so.

Fares and Ticketing

Bus fares in Taranaki have not increased for a number of years, and are now significantly cheaper in real terms compared to 2016. The Government funded half price fares for all people between April 2022 and June 2023, and now provides concessions for children, young adults, Community Services Card holders and Super Gold card holders.

Fare setting is a balance between making services affordable for people on lower incomes (accessibility), providing an attractive savings compared with running a private car (mode shift) and ensuring that services are as (financially) sustainable as possible. Services in the region currently only cover around 25% of their operating costs. Increasing the level of fare revenue would enable more investment in improve services that will benefit everyone.

Increasing the number of people using the bus can be achieved both by gaining new passengers and increasing journey frequency by existing passengers. In both cases, the use of innovative fares and ticketing products can increase customer loyalty.

At present, there is no reward for frequent usage by people who pay the full fare and contribute most (in financial terms) to the service. Regular passengers pay the same single fare as occasional users. In order to encourage more regular usage, it is proposed to reward frequent full fare passengers with a weekly or monthly cap on the fares they pay. This means that any usage over the cap level is effectively discounted and then free for the remainder of the period.

The current Bee Card is being replaced by a national ticketing system, which enables passengers to use one single method of payment for council-operated public transport journeys across Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim is to introduce the national ticketing system in Taranaki at the time of new service contracts in 2025.

A longer-term aspiration is to develop integrated planning, booking and fare payment products for public transport across the region, and potentially in conjunction with other regions. This “Mobility as a Service” concept would enable people to request a journey anywhere in the region or country, and receive a range of options for undertaking it by different modes of travel - including walk, cycle, bus, rail, community transport, on-demand, taxi, ride share, and long-distance coach.

Service Planning and Procurement

The Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF) is the new approach for planning, procurement, and delivery of public transport services, and is underpinned by new objectives prioritising mode shift, fair and equitable treatment of employees, and improved environment and health outcomes.

The SPTF will enable Regional Councils to:

- Operate public transport services in-house or continue to outsource the operation of services to private operators;
- Directly own public transport assets, such as buses and depots;
- Plan, procure and operate public transport services (including inter-regional services) in an open and transparent manner;
- Prepare RPTPs in collaboration with Territorial Authorities;
- Provide any form of passenger transport service through any mode, other than air transport, whether delivered to a timetable or not; and
- Procure, contract, and deliver on-demand services separately to timetabled services.

In the short to medium term, TRC is not intending to make fundamental changes to its basic approach to service procurement, and will therefore continue to tender services to private operators who own and operate assets for the duration of a contract. However, in the longer term the potential for TRC to own assets and operate at least some services – where there are compelling reasons for doing so – will be considered during regular operational and performance reviews.

With the need to significantly improve overall service performance, including increasing passenger numbers, TRC will regularly review operations in order to identify enhancements or, in some cases, service reductions if justified by the data. The review process will be based on robust data which includes:

- Total passenger numbers;
- Average passenger numbers per journey;
- Passenger numbers of sections of route;
- Customer feedback;
- Levels of subsidy per passenger;
- Value of access for people who have no other means of transport;
- Farebox recovery; and
- Punctuality and reliability.

Future bus contracts will be based on a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which operators will be obliged to deliver against, including:

- **Service punctuality:** buses running to time (not late or early);
- **Service reliability:** buses running to the timetable; and
- **Customer service:** measured by numbers of complaints and compliments.

When any new services are proposed within a contractual unit, incumbent operators will have an opportunity to bid. However, TRC will give other operators an equal opportunity to bid, so barriers to market entry are reduced over time. Zero emission vehicles will provide an opportunity for TRC to consider its appetite to own assets such as buses, depots and infrastructure. Key criteria for decision making will relate to long term value for money and ensuring competitive markets.

5. Strategic framework

Policies and potential initiatives

The objectives and outcome statements outlined at the start of Section 4 will be delivered by a series of policies and initiatives:

Table 16: Policies and potential initiatives for RPTP 2024

RPTP Policy	Potential initiatives to deliver policy
<p>Increase the convenience and attractiveness of public transport for a range of journey purposes through investment in improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise existing investment in bus services, and identify short term improvements within current budgets to be implemented in 2024. • Engage with communities and local service providers to establish and design public transport services around passenger needs. • Produce business case for bus services and infrastructure to secure long term investment. • Procurement of new bus contracts in 2025 provide the opportunity to fund service improvements, supported by upgraded infrastructure. • Investigate and prioritise delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Higher frequency urban services in New Plymouth to provide more choice and opportunities for service transfer. ○ Greater integration between New Plymouth urban and school services to make best use of available resources. ○ Higher frequency Ōpunake / Hāwera to New Plymouth Connector services to support mode shift on State Highway 3. ○ More evening and weekend services to support shift workers and the leisure economy. ○ New or improved bus services to provide greater coverage of the region, for example around the coast and to neighbouring regions. ○ Inter-regional passenger rail services from New Plymouth to Whanganui and beyond to Palmerston North (and onward connections to Auckland and Wellington). ○ Provision of Community Transport services in rural areas which currently have little or no public transport options. • Identify locations where bus priority will be required to protect bus services from the impact of traffic congestion, and secure investment to deliver projects. • Stay abreast of Territorial Authority District Plan policies for location of new development to ensure future public transport network includes new routes or extensions.
<p>Improve public transport service access for disabled people, so that they have the same transport choices and opportunities as the able-bodied.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support Total Mobility provision across the region. • Introduce accessible buses on Connector and Southlink services as part of new contracts. • Work with Territorial Authorities to improve accessibility for disabled people at bus stops, and on active travel routes to bus stops.

RPTP Policy	Potential initiatives to deliver policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Community Transport services are supplied with accessible vehicles where feasible.
<p>Provide high quality information that enables passengers to easily understand and navigate services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide online and paper timetables for all public transport services, and disseminate through a wide range of outlets. • Promote the Transit-app as the short to medium source of real-time passenger journey planning information. • Roll out of real time passenger information at bus stops, as funding permits. • Work with Territorial Authorities to realise opportunities to increase visibility and information provision at bus stops, including flags at all locations and totems at major hubs. • Investigate an integrated "Active Travel Taranaki" web site, potentially as part of a wider inter-regional collaboration, to provide a one-stop shop for all public transport, walking, cycling, and disability access information.
<p>Contribute to reductions in carbon emissions from transport, improved air quality and reduced traffic congestion through mode shift to public transport and decarbonising the bus fleet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and implement a business case which makes a strong investment case for higher bus service frequencies to encourage mode shift away from the private car. • Register and promote exempt services which are provided on a commercial basis. • Investigate options for future bus service contracts using alternative fuels or modern diesel vehicles which have the highest environmental standards. • Evaluate and progress Climate Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funding opportunities for trialling of hydrogen buses on services with high daily vehicle kilometres. • Take advantage of funding opportunities for acceleration of zero emission bus implementation into the urban fleet.
<p>Provide a fares and ticketing system that is simple, affordable and attracts and retains customers while balancing user contribution with public funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review fares on an annual basis and implement any changes in response to passenger numbers and financial performance. • Encourage and prioritise payment for bus travel by electronic card-based methods - especially groups benefitting from concessions, who will be required to use a Bee card for their journey, or else pay cash. • Continue to provide concessionary fares for children, young adults, Super Gold, and Community Services card holders, in line with national government policy. • Investigate fare capping to reward frequent public transport usage.
<p>Undertake an approach to planning, procurement and monitoring of services that supports the efficient and effective delivery of services while providing good value for money.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update contract units in response to service improvement proposals approved following a business case. • Implement the requirements of the Sustainable Public Transport Framework (SPTF). • Undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of service, unit, and system performance. • RPTP Programme Working Group (PWG) with the Territorial Authorities to meet on a regular basis to review progress against actions, and agree revised or further actions as required.

Key Performance Indicators and targets

To measure delivery of the RPTP, a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets are proposed for further investigation. The targets are currently aspirational, and depend on the ability of TRC and Territorial Authority partners obtaining sufficient funding to deliver the necessary service and infrastructure improvements. Therefore all KPIs and targets will be re-visited and fully tested as part of a forthcoming business case.

The targets are designed to signal the desire to elicit change in the public transport system in Taranaki. These targets will be treated in a transitional manner until new contracts are introduced in mid-2025. During the next 18 months, the appropriateness of baseline data will be confirmed, and a monitoring and reporting framework set up.

Table 17: Key Performance Indicators and proposed aspirational targets

Key Performance Indicator	Proposed target
Total short-term passenger numbers on regional services (up to mid-2025)	Increase total passenger numbers by 10% over 2023/24 baseline
Total long-term passenger numbers on regional services	Increase total passenger numbers between 200% and 300% by 2035
Public transport mode share for journeys to work	Increase public transport mode share to 10% by 2035
Public transport mode share for journeys to school	Increase public transport mode share to 30% by 2035
Punctuality of bus services	99% of services arrive at timing points between 1 minute early and 4 minutes 59 seconds late
Reliability of bus services	99% of services run as scheduled as per the operating contract
Accessibility of urban bus services	90% of residents in New Plymouth, Bell Block and Waitara living within 400 metres of a bus service at a minimum hourly frequency by 2026
Accessibility of regional and rural bus / community transport services	90% of residents outside of New Plymouth with access to a weekday bus or community transport service to their nearest township
Accessibility for disabled people	100% of bus stops accessible for people with disabilities, including wheelchairs and mobility scooters, by 2028
Bus passenger satisfaction	90% of surveyed customers and community stakeholders are satisfied with the public transport service and total mobility scheme
Greenhouse Gas emissions from public transport	At least 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per kilometre travelled for public transport bus services by 2035
Farebox recovery	Increase farebox recovery to a minimum 40% of operating costs by 2028

The final range of KPIs and targets will be monitored using data collected from:

- Ticketing system;
- Passenger surveys;
- Real-time service monitoring;
- Use of GIS software;
- School and workplace travel plans; and
- National census.

Appendix A: Services integral to the public transport network

New Plymouth Citylink

Type	Days of operation	Service number	Route
Urban	Monday to Friday	1	City Centre - Moturoa
		2	City Centre - Whalers Gate
		3	City Centre – Lynmouth - Marfell
		4	City Centre - Westtown - Hurdon
		5	City Centre - Frankleigh Park - Ferndale
		6	City Centre – Vogeltown - Brooklands
		7	City Centre - Welbourn - Highlands Park
		8	City Centre – Merrilands - Highlands Park
		9	City Centre - The Valley - Glen Avon
	Saturday	10	Western loop of city
		11	Eastern loop of city
	Monday to Friday	20	City Centre - Bell Block - Waitara
	School	School days only	12
21			Waitara to Spotswood College
22			Lepperton / Motunui to New Plymouth Boys High School
23			Urenui / Tikorangi to Highlands Intermediate School
24			Waitara to Francis Douglas Memorial College
30			Bell Block to Highlands Intermediate School
31			Lepperton / Bell Block to Highlands / Vogeltown / Woodleigh
32			Bell Block to New Plymouth Girls High School
33			Bell Block to Francis Douglas Memorial College
34			Bell Block to Francis Douglas Memorial College
35			Bell Block to New Plymouth Boys High School
40			Ōkato to New Plymouth Boys High School
41			Ōmata to Highlands Intermediate
42			Oākura to Francis Douglas Memorial College
43			Oākura to New Plymouth Girls High School

Type	Days of operation	Service number	Route
		44	Oākura to Highlands Intermediate
		45	Oākura to New Plymouth Boys High School
		51	Orbiter
		52	Orbiter
		53	Orbiter
		54	Orbiter
		91	New Plymouth Girls High School to city centre*
		92	New Plymouth Girls Boys School to city centre*
		93	Sacred Heart Girls College to city centre*
		95	Highlands Intermediate School to city centre*
		98	Inglewood High School

* Operates afternoons only

Regional Services

Type	Days of operation	Route
Connector	Monday to Friday	Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford, Inglewood, New Plymouth
Your Connector	School Days	Hāwera, Eltham, Stratford, Inglewood, New Plymouth (various schools)
Southlink	Thursday	Ōpunake to Hāwera via Kaponga & Manaia (& Ohawe on demand)
	Tuesday and Thursday	Waverley – Pātea - Hāwera
	Friday	Ōpunake – Oakura - New Plymouth

Total Mobility

Area	Approved provider	Wheelchair facilities
New Plymouth	Driving Miss Daisy	Ramp
	Energy City Cabs	None
	Freedom Companion Driving Service	Ramp
	Ironside Vehicle Society	Hoist
	New Plymouth Taxis	None
Hāwera	STOPS	Ramp

Appendix B: Unit establishment principles

TRC manages bus service contracts according to a number of principles, as detailed below.

Network and service review

Before identifying units, the Council defines routes and services that are integral to the region's public transport network (see Appendix A above). The proposed unit design considers Council's ability to undertake future service reviews in consultation with operators and stakeholders. Changes to services aim to meet foreseeable local community needs to be delivered within a unit.

Marketable whole

Units should be potentially deliverable by operators either as stand-alone operations, or as part of a wider suite of services. Under the Sustainable Public Transport Framework there is no automatic exclusivity for a single operator within each unit.

Customer market

Units should have readily identifiable customer markets for services, enabling operators and the Council to apply the right commercial behaviours to growing the market. A customer market might generally be thought of as a geographic area, but could also be generated by a particular activity or use – for example, an airport, shopping precinct, hospital, major employer, or university.

Whole-route operation

Each unit must comprise a service or group of services that operates on the entire length of one or more routes.

Unit attractiveness

Units should be attractive to a tenderer, and enable competition from a range of operators. Units should be efficient groups of services in terms of management, vehicle utilisation, operational feasibility, service efficiency etc.

Opportunities to group units in tenders

Opportunities for operators to tender for units in groups to encourage efficiencies and, therefore value for money, will be considered.

Mode specific

Units must be single-mode specific, so a unit cannot include both a bus and a ferry or train route.

School services consideration

School services not provided by the Ministry of Education will be arranged into units. School services operating on a timetabled route are logically allocated to that unit.

Wider network consideration

This includes considering connections between routes and achieving higher frequencies by services overlapping on parts of a trunk route.

Current units and future options

Table 18: Public Transport Units - Current and future options

Current unit	Current arrangement	Future options
New Plymouth Citylink	<p>Combined contract for urban and school services.</p> <p>10 weekday urban services.</p> <p>2 Saturday urban services.</p> <p>27 school services.</p>	<p>Retain a single unit, and better integrate urban and school services.</p> <p>Split urban and schools into separate units.</p> <p>Split urban services into separate units.</p>
Connector	<p>One contract.</p> <p>Four weekday services per day.</p>	<p>Retain separate units.</p> <p>Combine into a single unit for all regional services.</p> <p>Replacement of some services with Community Transport.</p>
Your Connector	<p>One contract.</p> <p>Two weekday services per day.</p>	
Southlink	<p>Three contracts.</p> <p>Four return journeys per week.</p>	

Appendix C: Significance policy

Purpose

TRC's significance policy is required to determine whether any proposed variation to the RPTP is significant for the purpose of section 126 (4) of the LTMA, which refers to the level of consultation that is required before a variation can be adopted.

A more streamlined process may be adopted for matters not considered significant.

For the purpose of this policy:

- Significance is a continuum, from variations of high significance through to variations of low significance. The policy sets a significance threshold, relating to a high degree of significance.
- If a variation is not significant then the consultation requirements under section 125 (1) of the LTMA do not apply. This does not imply that the variation is unimportant or that no consultation will take place.
- The Regional Council fully intends to undertake targeted consultation on matters that affect specific communities and stakeholders, including operators, even when these matters do not invoke the significance threshold outlined in this policy.

Significant variations

A significant variation is likely to have more than minor impact on any of the following:

- The Council's ability to achieve its vision.
- The Council's ability to achieve the strategic direction and policies of the RPTP.
- The Council's ability to achieve the objectives of the RPTP, or the Regional Land Transport Plan.
- The reallocation of the funding available for public transport in the region.

When assessing the significance of any proposed variation, the Council will consider:

- The reasons for the variation, and the alternatives available.
- The magnitude of the variation in terms of its financial cost to the region.
- The extent to which the proposed variation departs from the strategic direction and guiding principles contained within the RPTP.
- The proportion of the regional community that would be affected to a moderate or greater extent by the variation.
- The likely effect on the overall level, quality, and use of public transport services in the region.
- The extent to which the variation is consistent with the Regional Land Transport Plan, and the Government Policy Statement.
- The implications for the present and future economic development and efficiency of the region, safety and personal security, access and mobility, environmental sustainability, or public health.
- The likely effect on the Council's Long Term Plan.

Any variation that amends this significance policy is deemed to be significant and must follow the consultation requirements in section 125 (1) of the LTMA.

Targeted engagement

When the Council finds that a proposed variation is not significant, the Council will undertake targeted stakeholder engagement.

As service reviews affect only a part of the region, full consultation will not generally be required. Key stakeholders will be included in preliminary engagement as service plans are developed, and targeted public engagement will follow when options have been identified.

Minor changes in service delivery that are required to improve efficiency (such as adding or removing trips, and minor route changes) have only a local impact. In these cases, engagement will generally be undertaken on a low level with the operator(s) involved, the relevant Territorial Authority, and communities who benefit from the services.

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

This policy does not preclude the Council from a more comprehensive consultation process for a variation, that does not meet the significance threshold, if the benefits of that consultation are considered to outweigh the costs.

Appendix D: Land Transport Management Act 2003 requirements

Table 19: Summary of how the RPTP delivers against the LTMA

Purpose	Provision	Contribution
3 Purpose	The purpose of this Act is to contribute to an effective, efficient, and safe land transport system in the public interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan's contribution to the purpose of the LTMA, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall strategic approach to public transport in the Taranaki region has been assessed through the RLTP process. A range of strategic options were developed and evaluated as part of the RLTP process.
114A Principles (1) (a)	Regional councils and public transport operators should work in partnership and collaborate with territorial authorities to deliver the regional public transport services and infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of passengers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RPTP includes a section on working together which covers both our relationship with operators and Territorial Authorities.
114A (1) (b)	The provision of public transport services should be coordinated with the aim of achieving the levels of integration, reliability, frequency, and coverage necessary to encourage passenger growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced levels of service on the urban service in New Plymouth, Bell Block and Waitara will contribute to improved journey times, reduced congestion, and better use of existing transport capacity. The coverage provided by the regional public transport network as a whole will provide better access to education, health, employment, and areas that contribute to economic growth.
114A (1) (c)	Competitors should have access to regional public transport markets to increase confidence that public transport services are priced efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of units is designed to enable regular entrance to the market for a range of operators.
114A Principles (1) (d)	Incentives should exist to reduce reliance on public subsidies to cover the cost of providing public transport services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of units, establishing a partnership approach and regular monitoring aligned with Waka Kotahi's Key Performance Indicators will provide the framework for reducing reliance on public subsidies. Specific incentives for performance will be incorporated into contract relationships with operators.
115 Principles (1) (e)	The planning and procurement of public transport services should be transparent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RPTP clearly sets out both the planning and procurement approach for the Council's public transport services.
124 (a) (ii)	Has been prepared in accordance with any relevant guidelines that the Transport Agency has issued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waka Kotahi's Requirements for Urban Buses (2011) have been taken into account and referenced in this Plan.

Purpose	Provision	Contribution
124 (a) (iii)	Is, if it includes a matter that is not within the scope of the regional land transport plan, otherwise consistent with that plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of this Plan is to give effect to the public transport components of the current RLTP. • The RLTP was assessed against the regional policy statement and regional plans, and was found to be consistent with them. • District plans were also taken into account during the development of the RLTP. Future versions will be revised to be consistent with the RLTP
124 (c) (i)	Take into account any national energy efficiency and conservation strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national energy efficiency and conservation strategy was taken into account in the development and assessment of the preferred strategic option in the RLTP.
124 (c) (ii)	Take into account any relevant regional policy statement, regional plan, district plan, or proposed regional plan or district plan under the Resource Management Act 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of this Plan is to give effect to the public transport components of the RLTP. • The RLTP was assessed against the regional policy statement and regional plans, and was found to be consistent with them. • District plans were also taken into account during the development of the RLTP. • Future versions will be revised to be consistent with RLTP.
124 (c) (iii)	Take into account the public transport funding likely to be available within the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Investment and Funding section of the Plan provides a detailed assessment of the funding likely to be available within the region.
124 (c) (iv)	Take into account 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a procurement strategy for transport activities. • The objective of the strategy is to procure public transport services in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achieves value for money, ○ Encourages competitive and efficient markets, and ○ Sustains those markets.
124 (c) (v)	Take into account the views of public transport operators in the region	There has been detailed engagement with public transport operators to enable their views to be taken into account during the development of the Plan.
35 and 120 (1) (vii)	Consider the needs of persons who are transport-disadvantaged	The Accessibility and Equity section of the Plan considers the needs of the transport-disadvantaged.