

Wellington City Bus Review
Greater Wellington Regional Council
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Mt Cook Mobilised Submission on the Bus Review

Mt Cook Mobilised (MCM) is a residents and community group that represents an inner-city suburb of about 6000 people. It was formed in 2007. About 30% of our households do not own or run a private motor car, and a high proportion of all residents are commuters, so Mt Cook Mobilised favours mass passenger transport. The response to the Bus Review is in two parts: first, how it affects Mt Cook directly, and, second, how it affects the wider city.

1. How the Bus Review Affects Mt Cook

Mt Cook sits astride three major bus routes; those using the Brooklyn Hill Road, those using Taranaki/Wallace St and those using lower Adelaide Road. Under your proposals these are to be re-designated Routes D (Brooklyn), C (Wallace St) and A (Adelaide Rd). While servicing Mt Cook all three routes cater to a greater degree for the suburbs further out.

Route D

Route D services western residents of Mt Cook at the Brooklyn Hill Road section. Its two sub-routes, D1 and D2, are to be scheduled on a 30-minute frequency. MCM suggests that the two services should be evenly staggered so that, on the Brooklyn Hill Road section, a bus appears every 15 minutes. We assume this is what is implied by the proposed frequency information (page 5 of your *What Do You Want* booklet says 15-minutes frequency, but page 10 says route D1 every 30 minutes and route D2 every 30 minutes).

Route C

Route C, however, is a crucial route for Mt Cook. MCM favours high-frequency scheduling of services on this route. The proposed frequency of weekday services at peak times, 10-minute intervals, is in fact a reduction of service. It would give us about 16 services in each direction compared to 22-25 at present (7-9.30am or 4-6.30pm). Over the course of a weekday we would get about 70 services as opposed to over 90 at present. The proposed rate of 15-minute intervals on weekends is supported as it is better than the current service.

We have concerns about two other aspects of the proposal. The first is re-routing the existing service along Ghuznee St, The Terrace and Bowen St. While we appreciate the logic for this is to get traffic off the Golden Mile, it would be a deleterious step for many current users of the service. This new route would make no difference to journeys between Taranaki St and the bus terminal/railway station, but it would adversely affect trips into the CBD, for work or shopping. Users of the Public Library, for instance, would have a significant walk to catch their service on The

Terrace, and Ghuznee St is not much closer. Members of MCM with young children or infants in buggies say this would add a significant obstacle to their use of public transport. This applies to the elderly also.

We also believe The Terrace already to be a congested street, which in parts is barely wide enough for small vehicles to pass each other. Is it really a good option for buses?

MCM believes that a better option is to keep Route C on the Golden Mile but designate the Golden Mile (at least Willis St from Manners to Willeston, and Lambton Quay) for bus-only traffic during week-day peak hours (7-9am, 4-6pm). This would lighten the traffic load on those streets and give mass passenger transport priority. There is plenty of parallel roading for private vehicles to use in peak hours (Wakefield St, Victoria St, Featherston St). An option is to use more of the waterfront roads, Jervois Quay and Customhouse Quay, for some bus routes.

Another point about the Ghuznee St/Terrace route is its role in servicing the universities. We believe the current No.18 Route (once known as the Campus Connection) is a better way to do that – specific diesel services which link Massey and Victoria's campuses in Kelburn and CBD. They are popular services that we see many students using throughout Mt Cook. It does not need to be trolley-bus routes.

One of these options would also avoid the second concern we have for the proposed Route C (which was not mentioned in your consultation documents but was raised at our meeting in which your proposals were discussed) that the route is to be converted to diesel-only buses.

Removing the trolley-bus service from Route C is not supported by MCM. This would not be an environmentally-sustainable move, and the only logic for its comes from the proposal to redirect the route via The Terrace and through new parts of the outer suburbs (such as the Miramar cutting), which are not currently wired for trolley buses. As well as their carbon emissions, diesel buses are noisier than trolley-buses – a low-frequency noise which penetrates domestic walls.

We say change the routing to keep Route-C a trolley-bus service. With so much investment in the infrastructure so far, dismantling the wired network is a retrograde step and contrary to Wellington City's policy on limiting impacts on climate change. We are sure the network can be maintained at reasonable cost until new technology is mature enough for introduction (such as battery-powered buses).

Route A

As with Route D, we see Route A as primarily serving suburbs further out, in this case Newtown and Island Bay. It is, however, an important service for Mt Cook residents of lower Adelaide Road and Tasman St areas, a population which the Wellington City Council is keen to see increase. Again, MCM suggests that the two services are evenly staggered so that on lower Adelaide Road, a bus appears every 7.5 minutes. We assume this is what is implied by the proposed frequency information (page 5 of your *What Do You Want* booklet says 7.5-minutes frequency, but page 10 says route A1 every 10-15 minutes and route A2 every 15 minutes).

2. How the Bus Review Affects Wellington

MCM is in favour of the aims of the review, which are to increase bus patronage and convenience. We like the idea of the global-ticketing concept. We feel light-rail or at least dedicated bus-ways should be investigated for the major arterial routes through

central Wellington (railway station to hospital at least, or airport).

We have already raised the concept of making the Golden Mile bus-only during peak periods on weekdays. Taking this idea further, the Golden Mile could be converted into bus shuttle service running from Courtenay Place to the Bus Terminus/Railway Station which is both of a very-high frequency and FREE. All the other routes could then drop their paying passengers at the edges of this core conveyor service. Route D in that case would stop at Willis/Dixon or Manners St, Route C at the bottom of Taranaki St, and Route A on Cambridge/Kent Tce. That would get more people using buses.

We look forward to more information on the proposed bus interchanges, including the interchange mentioned for Riddiford St outside Wellington Public Hospital. These will only affect Mt Cook residents when travelling further out than Mt Cook, presumed to be a minority of our bus users. We would want to know how these interchanges would work, what shelter would be available, what wait times are proposed and fare implications for travellers.

We also think future changes to the bus services should be co-ordinated with Wellington City Council. A specific case in mind are the proposed bus lanes for Adelaide Road (of which we have seen an initial design) and Taranaki/Wallace St. Surely improving bus patronage must include planning for these changes to our use of the streets, which in the case of Taranaki/Wallace St would be a major change.

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