



Report 10.518
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Committee Regional Transport Committee
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Let's Carpool Programme Evaluation

1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with an update on progress of the Let's Carpool programme launched in May 2009.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

Greater Wellington launched the Let's Carpool programme in May 2009. The aim is to encourage the uptake of carpooling and increase vehicle occupancy for trips to and from work in the Wellington region, particularly for those trips into and within major urban centres during peak hours and for those that may not live or work near public transport routes. The initiative is part of the Regional Transport Committee's Travel Demand Management Plan.

The programme, aimed at individual commuters as well as workplaces, allows commuters who register with the Let's Carpool website to search for and make contact with other registrants who make similar journeys and could be potential carpool matches.

A target of 1000 registrants within the first year of operation was initially set for the programme. By March 2010 this target was exceeded with over 1200 people registered on the site. The programme is promoted through newspapers, radio, online advertisements, workplace contacts and banners.

An evaluation of Let's Carpool was undertaken throughout May and June 2010 by the research unit of the New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities, University of Otago. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine whether the programme has encouraged commuters to change how they travel to work and to provide insight into the barriers to carpooling and the ways in which Let's Carpool could be improved in future.

4. **Comment**

The evaluation included a survey of all Let's Carpool registrants. A copy of the report is in **Attachment 1**. The results indicated positive trends towards carpooling and away from single occupancy private vehicle use. The percentage of people who reported to be carpooling increased from 12.4% at the time of registration, to 27.9% in June 2010. Those who drove alone decreased from 36.6% to 29.9% and the average number of days participants drove alone dropped significantly from 5.1 to 4.7.

Of those that were carpooling, 71% of people found the Let's Carpool initiative to have been useful in starting their carpool. The main barrier inhibiting people from carpooling was not being able to find matches from the website.

Overall, the results from the recent evaluation are very positive, with increases in carpooling recorded alongside decreases in single occupancy private vehicle use. The evaluation identified several areas where efforts can be made to improve the Let's Carpool programme in the future. A continued strong marketing campaign will be required to overcome the issue of users not finding a match on the site. While this is improving, many registrants need prompting to revisit the website to receive an updated match report. Continuing to increase the number of new registrants will also aid in creating a comprehensive and functional network of carpoolers.

Results from the recent evaluation also suggested that disruptions to rail services have temporarily shifted some people into private vehicles. While carpooling has provided a positive way to lessen the impacts of this trend on congestion, it will be important to continue to target the right markets at the right times to avoid negative effects on public transport patronage. This can be achieved by directing promotions at those driving private vehicles, using peak hour radio advertising, appropriate banner placement and newspaper advertisement wording.

Registrants who completed the recent survey also identified a number of smaller changes that could improve the programme. These will be addressed and implemented where and when possible.

The report in **Attachment 1** provides detail, further results and discussion.

5. **Communication**

The Sustainable Transport team will continue to promote the Let's Carpool programme throughout the region through the ongoing travel awareness programme, the workplace and business travel toolbox, one-off events and at every opportunity available.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

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Attachment 1: Weaving a local web - Evaluating the effectiveness of Let's Carpool to encourage carpooling to work