



Fare Structure Review

Draft Communications Plan

1. Background

Greater Wellington Regional Council's Annual Plan 2011/12 requires it to complete a review of public transport services fare structures in the region.

The Regional Public Transport Plan requires fare structures to be reviewed every six years. The Plan also identifies that the next review should be conducted in 2011/12.

The last fare structure review took place in 2005/06, resulting in the current integrated zonal fare structure. Minor changes have been made to the fare structure since then.

The review will cover how fares are calculated, the mechanism for charging, e.g. cash, tickets, smart cards, discounts for multi-trip tickets and stored value cards and concessions.

The review will not cover fare levels, fares for commercial services or any changes to the fare-box recovery policy.

Some of the key contextual issues surrounding this review are a strong demand from particular groups of public transport users for discounted fares, the Council's high prioritisation of the move toward a network-wide electronic fare payment system, and the growing need for integrated fares particularly in relation to the imminent Wellington City Bus Review changes.

A range of other matters that have been raised since the last fare structure review will also be considered as part of the review.

2. Communications objectives

- Raise awareness and understanding of the review
- Help achieve high level of participation in the community engagement / consultation phases
- Reduce misinformation
- Respond to concerns

- Manage expectations
- Ensure internal and external stakeholders are informed regularly and effectively on progress with and issues arising from the study.

3. Audiences

- Public transport users
- Potential public transport users
- Public transport operators
- Public transport operator staff representatives and unions
- Public transport advocates
- Wellington regional ratepayers
- Central government and agencies
- General public

4. Key messages

Greater Wellington is required, through its annual plan and regional public transport plan, to carry out a review of the fare structure every six years.

The last fare structure review took place in 2005/06, resulting in the current integrated zonal fare structure.

The review will look at how fares are calculated now, i.e. the zonal system, and will explore changes and alternatives.

Current levels at which fares are set will not be covered in this review. Greater Wellington carries out an annual review of fare levels, which is separate from this review.

The way fares are paid, e.g. cash, paper tickets, stored value cards will be reviewed and different mechanisms such as electronic ticketing, integrated ticketing and integrated fares, will be explored.

Current discounts for smart cards and multi-trip tickets will be reviewed and other options will be explored.

The review will look at the concessions that are currently available, e.g. children's, some off-peak services, and explore the need for, merits and affordability of other possible concessions.

The public will be invited to give formal feedback on proposed changes to the fare structure.

The review is expected to be completed by October 2012 and changes are likely to take effect early in 2013.

All options coming out of the review will need to fit within existing budgetary and policy frameworks.

5. Risks

Risk	Mitigated by
Unrealistic expectations are raised.	Ensuring that parameters of the review, such as the farebox recovery policy, are clearly and regularly communicated. Responding quickly and effectively. Communicating effectively with target audiences.
Public criticism that the review's outcomes are pre-determined	Delivery of clear and timely information about what is being reviewed, the options that are being explored and how they will be evaluated.
Lack of public participation in the consultation.	Ensuring information is targeted effectively to particular audiences.
Lack of operator buy-in	Ensuring engagement and consultation with operators is effective and meaningful.

6. Tools

A range of tools will be used to communicate the review. These include:

- Media releases and briefings
- Metlink and Greater Wellington websites
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Posters on trains and buses
- Real Time Information displays
- Publications – *Metlink News*, *Our Region*, tertiary education magazines
- Meetings
- Council reports.

7. External communications activities at each phase

7.1 Preliminary - October – November 2011

- Media release announcing the start of the review

- Item in December issue of *Metlink News*
- Interviews, letters to editor as required.

7.2 Identification of alternative structures and choice of options - December 2011 – February 2012

- No media activity initiated
- Interviews, letters to editor as required.

7.3 Development of chosen options - February – March 2012

- Media release
- Articles in student magazines and other special interest publications, *Our Region, Metlink News*.

7.4 Initial consultation with public and operators - April –May 2012

A separate community engagement / consultation plan will be developed for this phase.

- Media release & possible briefings announcing consultation
- Opinion piece for Dominion Post
- “Live chat” on Dominion Post website
- Media release announcing results of consultation.

7.5 Identify and develop preferred option - June – July 2012

- Media release announcing preferred option and final consultation
- *Metlink News* article.

7.6 Final consultation with public and stakeholders August 2012

- *A separate community engagement / consultation plan will be developed for this phase.*
- Interviews, letters to editor as required.

8. Internal communications

Throughout the course of the review, there will be a range of communications with public transport operators, regional councillors, Regional Transport Committee, and the Fare Structure Review Reference and Technical Work Groups to get their feedback and inform them of progress and issues with the review.

Communications with the operators will be through informal emails, phone conversations and formal meetings.

Communications with regional councillors will be through reports to regular meetings, the Councillors Bulletin and emails.

Members of the Regional Transport Committee will be provided with updates at their regular meetings.

Communications with the Technical Working and Reference Groups will be through regular monthly meetings and emails.

9. Spokespeople and contacts

Media spokespeople for the review are:

- Peter Glensor, Chair, Economic Wellbeing Committee
- Fran Wilde, Chair, Greater Wellington Regional Council

Media contact:

- Philippa Lagan, Communications, Greater Wellington Regional Council

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