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Mayor Tory Whanau
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Tēnā kōe Mayor Whanau

Wellington's Golden Mile - bus priority, stop rationalisation and the second spine

Thank you for your email of 2 February signalling Wellington City Council's consideration of re-phasing the Golden Mile project and Hutt Road upgrades (formerly part of Let's Get Wellington Moving) through your Long-Term Plan process.

We appreciate the ongoing commitment of Wellington City Council, and Ministers to delivering bus priority along key strategic corridors in Wellington, including a public transport spine along the harbour quays (the second spine). Giving buses priority will achieve great outcomes for Wellington's public transport users, allowing for greater capacity and improved service delivery to the north, east, and south and importantly will enable the city to manage predicted population growth.

We acknowledge the significant concerns surrounding investment in water and water meters, which you note that WCC is prioritising in the early years of your LTP. We also note WCC's re-prioritisation exercise focusing on Courtenay Place as the first stage of Golden Mile redevelopment.

Greater Wellington has been working with Wellington City since 2018 on plans to improve bus operations on the Golden Mile. We remain committed to making progress on the Golden Mile and the second spine and have outlined below what we see as the way forward on these projects.

Measures to improve bus priority, speed up services and provide capacity for more services are critical to the ongoing successful delivery of the Wellington Region's bus network. Currently 90% of Wellington City's bus services use the Golden Mile and harbour quays. Without further improvements, including bus stop rationalisation, priority measures and the second spine, existing services are likely to start to experience a degradation of service, which in turn makes public transport less attractive for passengers. As the city population grows, enhanced public transport will be essential to manage congestion and provide real transport choice.

The quality of bus stop infrastructure is an important part of the overall customer experience. Improved separation between waiting bus passengers and pedestrians, and increased shelter and seating proposed as part of the Golden Mile design will provide significant benefits in terms of improving customer satisfaction and mode shift.

To this end, Greater Wellington remains committed to new modern bus stop infrastructure (two stops) at the Embassy Theatre end of Courtney Place, and the removal of the stops outside Reading Cinemas and St James Theatre (latter subject to improvements to the Manners St stops).

While we understand the rationale for delaying the rest of the Golden Mile works, GW would like to investigate with WCC the potential to get new modern bus stops in where we can, including stops at Arty Bees and the former Burger King. We would also like to improve the Willis St bus stops and rationalise stops on Lambton Quay (consolidate Cable Car and Farmers stops, and the old ANZ Bank and old Kirkcaldies stops). We propose to remove the stop on Manners Mall (near Department of Conservation). We accept that modernisation of stops at the north end of Lambton Quay will need to be done in conjunction with WCC upgrades.

Development of the second spine

Bus infrastructure on the second spine allows us to grow our network. The Golden Mile will reach its maximum bus capacity limit for efficient bus operations by 2025. The second spine will relieve pressure on the central city bus network and provide faster cross-city connections to key regional destinations such as the hospital and airport.

We await confirmation that the second spine will be funded through the WCC LTP and the National Land Transport Fund. We remain committed to the second spine and are signalling commitment in our Long-Term Plan to delivering new, modernised bus stops along it. We propose to work with your organisation to deliver these stops from 2024/25.

Governance and implementation

GW recognises the substantial investment of funding and staff time required to achieve successful implementation of the Golden Mile upgrades, bus priority lanes and the second spine. Our Council will soon consider a budget provision of up to \$88m over 10 years to move these initiatives forward. We also intend to dedicate GW staff time and expertise to these programmes.

Acknowledging our respective roles - WCC as Road Controlling Authority and GW as the Public Transport Authority – GW is looking for a joint programme arrangement to direct and monitor progress to assure the best possible outcomes and value for money. We need our processes to be aligned and our work programmes to be well-integrated, so that we optimise efficiency and deliver as quickly as possible.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this further and to agree a shared programme approach with you.

Ngā mihi



Daran Ponter
Council Chair



Thomas Nash
Chair, Transport Committee