ATTACHMENTS

Council Meeting Under Separate Cover
Report 8.4 Attachment
Wednesday, 2 April 2025

12 March 2025

Attn: Greater Wellington Regional Council

Tēnā koutou katoa

Masterton District Council Submission on Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-35 Consultation

Masterton District Council (MDC) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035. This submission reflects our community's needs and aspirations regarding public transport services in our district.

MDC's community outcomes include fostering a sustainable and healthy environment, and developing efficient, safe, and effective infrastructure. Our strategic and operational priorities for the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan encompass delivering efficient services, improving infrastructure, valuing our community, enabling positive growth, and responding to climate change.

Effective public transport is crucial to achieving these outcomes. As outlined in our Climate Action Plan, MDC is committed to working collaboratively with GWRC to ensure public transport services in Masterton meet both current and future user needs.

MDC supports Metlink's Lower North Island Integrated Mobility project, which will see significant upgrades to the Wairarapa Line ensuring Wairarapa has a railway that:

- is built to last
- is safer for rail users and road users
- can support more reliable and faster services, and
- can move more freight.

Our community

Our community of over 29,000 residents are spread across an area of 2,300km^2. We have a reasonably vulnerable population: 22 per cent of our residents are pensioners (compared to 16 per cent nationally), and 24 per cent are under 20 years old, leaving just over half the population at 'working age'. We also have large variances in deprivation: Masterton is considered more deprived than the New Zealand average and is therefore likely to be more vulnerable to economic shock.

This reflects the need for transport opportunities in Masterton outside of driving.
We have experienced significant growth over the last decade. Between 2014 and 2023, our population increased by 20.5 per cent. Projections show the population will continue to trend upwards. It is estimated the Masterton population will grow by an average 1.5 per cent per annum until 2054.

Our emissions

According to the Greater Wellington Region Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory 2024, in 2023/24, the Masterton Community produced 89,792 tCO2e emissions through transport alone. This is 13.75 per cent of our community emissions.
We believe a strong, frequent and reliable public transport network will continue to help reduce these emissions further.

Responses to specific proposals

An Efficient, Equitable, Accessible, Affordable and Low-Carbon Public Transport Network

- Masterton, along with the wider Wairarapa region, is currently underserved by public transport, particularly during off-peak hours. We would welcome an increase in service frequency to encourage greater public transport usage both for bus and train services.
- Masterton currently has one of the lowest occupancy rates for public transport buses in the region. To be understand the reasons for this, it would be useful for a detailed review to be undertaken, which would allow potential solutions, such as on-demand services, to be developed.
- The ongoing issues experienced by Wairarapa train line users are of significant concern and negatively impact the reputation and usability of public transport for Masterton residents. We urge a focus on improving the reliability of the current service, alongside the planned infrastructure improvements for the line's future development.

Park and Ride – Demand Management

- While MDC acknowledges the need to manage demand for park and ride services in certain locations, we do not support implementing this approach in Masterton.
- There are currently no public transport links to the park and ride facilities in Masterton, which means commuters have limited alternatives to driving and parking at stations. Additionally, there are no ongoing parking demand issues at Masterton stations that would necessitate such measures.
- Given the amount of off-street parking near stations in Masterton, it is likely that any attempt to charge would lead to commuters parking on surrounding streets, which could cause issues for residents and road users.
- Adding additional costs for train users may also turn people away from using these services.

Pets and Dogs on Public Transport

- MDC supports initiatives to increase public transport accessibility. However, when considering any changes, the safety and comfort of all public transport users must remain paramount.
- We recommend that this proposal be considered alongside councils' responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 1996 to ensure consistency with existing regulations.

Phase Out of Cash on Board Buses

- MDC recognises the operational challenges posed by cash payments for public transport services.
- However, we emphasize that any cash phase-out must be thoroughly communicated to ensure all community members are aware of the changes. Masterton has a high percentage of older residents who often still rely on cash transactions, and we must ensure this demographic is not negatively impacted.
- Currently, there are limited Snapper card locations in Masterton. Any transition away from cash payments would need to be supported by a significant increase in these facilities throughout our district. This also needs to be considered in the development of the proposed nationwide ticketing programme.

Conclusion

Masterton District Council looks forward to continuing our productive relationship with Greater Wellington Regional Council in improving public transport options for our residents. We welcome further discussion on any aspects of this submission.

Ngā mihi, nā.

Kym Fell
Chief Executive

Gary Caffell
Mayor