

Ashburton District Council

Public Transport Research Workshop

Date: Thursday 12 September 2024
Time: 10.00am
Venue: Hine Paaka Council Chamber
Te Whare Whakatere, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton

Social Research & Evaluation

Report by Sarah Wylie and Sharon Gardner – March 2024

Supplementary

Copy of Officer's report to Council 5/06/24

Attached

7. *Public Transport Research Report*

Author *Mark Chamberlain; Roading Manager*
Executive Team Member *Neil McCann; Group Manager Infrastructure and Open Spaces*

Summary

- The purpose of this report is to receive “*The viability of and demand for a public transport pilot for the township of Ashburton*” research report prepared by Sarah Wylie and Sharon Gardner of Social Research and Evaluation
- Ashburton District Council, working in collaboration with Safer Mid Canterbury, sought to commission research with the public and local community groups on a possible public transport service for Ashburton Township.
- The purpose of the research was to evidence and understand public transport need, gauge public demand, and potentially inform development of a pilot transport service for the town.
- Depending on findings, these may be used to support funding allocations for a trial service and to provide the beginnings of a Business Case to ECAN and NZTA Waka Kotahi to rate for a public transport service for the township further downstream.

Recommendation

1. **That** Council receives “*The viability of and demand for a public transport pilot for the township of Ashburton*”.

Attachment

Appendix 1 The viability of and demand for a public transport pilot for the township of Ashburton.

Background

The background

1. Ashburton District Council, working in collaboration with Safer Mid Canterbury, sought to commission community research with the public and local community groups concerning a possible public transport service for Ashburton Township.
2. The purpose of the research was to evidence and understand public transport need, gauge public demand, and potentially inform development of a pilot transport service for the town. Depending on findings, these may be used to support funding allocations for a trial service and to provide the beginnings of a Business Case to ECAN and Waka Kotahi to rate for a public transport service for the township in the future.
3. This research was undertaken in early 2024, led by Sarah Wylie and with assistance from Sharon Gardner. Sarah has conducted several social and community research projects in the Ashburton District over the years.

The approach

4. The research utilised a mixed methods approach, including a brief literature scan and presentation of relevant Total Mobility and Stats NZ Census data, 18 phone interviews with key informants (with strong engagement and knowledge of Ashburton township's disabled communities, older adult residents, youth and refugee and migrant population, and/or significant insights into transport provision, needs and options for Ashburton), including 10 representatives of community provider organisations, 5 key Ashburton District Council and ECAN representatives and 3 transport providers.
5. As an alternative to interviews and to widen the reach of participation, a workshop was held on 21 February 2024 at Hakatere Marae, attended by 23 people, representing Safer Mid Canterbury, Ashburton Community Alcohol and Drug Service, Ashburton Hospital, Age Concern / Senior Citizens Ashburton, Grey Power, Ashburton Taxis, YMCA, Hakatere Marae, Ashburton Multicultural Council, Environment Canterbury, Sport Canterbury and Tangata Atumotu Trust.
6. A public survey was undertaken with strong promotion and engagement through both digital and hard copy, and 450 responses were received and analysed.

The findings

7. The findings included in the report are:
 - Current transport provision
 - Likely level of demand for public transport offerings in Ashburton
 - Needs and desires of the community and transport options best-suited to address these

- Potential impacts on existing service providers (local taxi service) and mitigation
- Things to consider alongside public transport

Options analysis

Option one – receive “*The viability of and demand for a public transport pilot for the township of Ashburton*” research report

<p>Advantages:</p> <p>The research gives an insight to the level of demand for public transport and the form that could take.</p>	<p>Disadvantages:</p> <p>There are no disadvantages to receiving the report.</p>
<p>Risks:</p> <p>The only minor risk to receiving the report maybe it will create an expectation that public transport will be provided.</p>	

Option two – do not receive “*The viability of and demand for a public transport pilot for the township of Ashburton*” research report

<p>Advantages:</p> <p>There are no advantages to not receiving the report.</p>	<p>Disadvantages:</p> <p>Time and money spent on research would be seen to be wasted.</p>
<p>Risks:</p> <p>Risk to Council reputation to funding research but not receiving the report on that research.</p>	

Legal/policy implications

Ashburton District Council Strategies and Plans

8. Ashburton District Walking and Cycling Strategy 2020-2030 Our Place: Our Strategy.
9. Ashburton District Council Operative District Plan - Transport.

Climate change

10. The research project itself will have no effect on climate change. Any increase in public transport may have a positive impact on vehicle emission reduction.

Review of legal / policy implications

Reviewed by In-house Counsel

Tania Paddock; Legal Counsel

Strategic alignment

11. The recommendation relates to Council's community outcome of *Residents are included and have a voice* because of the researchers made contact with a variety of residents and community groups.

Wellbeing		Reasons why the recommended outcome has an effect on this wellbeing
Economic		
Environmental	✓	Public transport may have a positive impact on vehicle emission reduction.
Cultural		
Social	✓	Public transport may provide improved or more community connections.

Financial implications

Requirement	Explanation
What is the cost?	No future costs for the research.
Is there budget available in LTP / AP?	N/A
Where is the funding coming from?	N/A
Are there any future budget implications?	Potentially, but this depends on future decisions on public transport, and funding would need to be considered as part of an annual plan or LTP process.
Reviewed by Finance	Erin Register; Finance Manager.

Significance and engagement assessment

Requirement	Explanation
Is the matter considered significant?	No
Level of significance	Medium
Rationale for selecting level of significance	The research and subsequent discussion will have a medium impact on the community, there will be community interest and will affect Council's level of service in the future.

Level of engagement selected	Inform- one way communication
Rationale for selecting level of engagement	The receipt of the research report will have little impact but future decisions resulting from the report will have more community impact and require more engagement.
Reviewed by Strategy & Policy	Mel Neumann; Policy Advisor

Next steps

12. Future decisions will need to be made on how to proceed based on the findings of the research. There are submissions on the LTP that raise public transport so may be a discussion as part of that process.