



Report 07.747
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Committee Transport and Access
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Summary of recent review of Kapiti bus/train connections

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the results of recent surveys of travel behaviour and the performance of bus/train connections in the Kapiti area.

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

Earlier this year we began looking at ways to reduce the pressure on the park and ride at Paraparaumu. It has reached capacity and there is no further land available to expand the site, and to extend the site upwards by building a second storey would be prohibitively expensive.

The rail system in Wellington is supported by a series of park and ride facilities at stations, such as the one at Paraparaumu. However, many of the region's park and rides are full by early morning, which indicates that there are likely to be additional people who would use the train if they could park their car at the station, but due to lack of parking spaces, do not.

It is likely that many of the people who park their car at Paraparaumu station could access the station by other means, for example, by bus or on foot. However, as they do not, this limits the space available for people who live further away from the station and for whom the private vehicle is the only realistic option.

As part of this investigation we conducted two surveys in the Kapiti area. The first to assess commuter behaviour and to test some possible actions; the second to record how often trains were late and how often bus/train connections were missed. This report sets out the results from these surveys.

4. Survey of passengers at Paraparaumu station

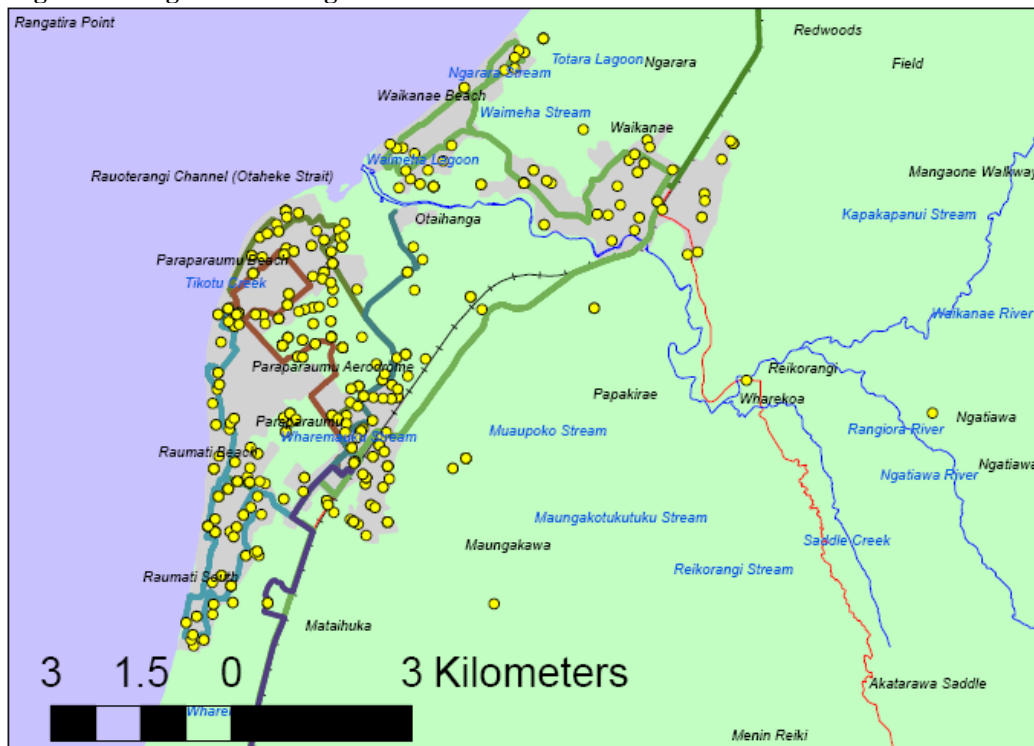
Greater Wellington commissioned a survey by market research company TNS of passengers boarding trains at Paraparaumu Station. Over a single fine morning in May of 2007 a questionnaire was handed out to everybody on the platform between 5.20am and 8.00am. Questionnaires were collected at Plimmerton, Porirua and Wellington Stations, and a freepost address was also provided. A total of 673 questionnaires were returned.

It should be noted that this survey was undertaken prior to the completion of the most recent increase in car parks in the park and ride in July 2007. The park and ride at Paraparaumu is by far the largest on the Paraparaumu line – 61 spaces were added in July to bring the total number available up to 521. Porirua has the next largest facility, with 265 spaces.

In the survey, respondents were asked to name the street and suburb they live in. The map below (Fig. 1) gives an indication of their distribution¹.

- The majority of people (55%) live in Paraparaumu/Paraparaumu Beach
- 22% live in Raumati
- 15% live in Waikanae
- The remaining 8% come from Otaki, Te Horo, Levin, and even one person from as far away as Palmerston North.

Figure 1. Origins of Passengers



¹ As the survey did not ask for the number of the property, this map shows the point as being no. 1 of each street. This means many of the dots overlap, and so the number of dots on the map does not equal the number of respondents, and can only give an indication of the locations people travel from.

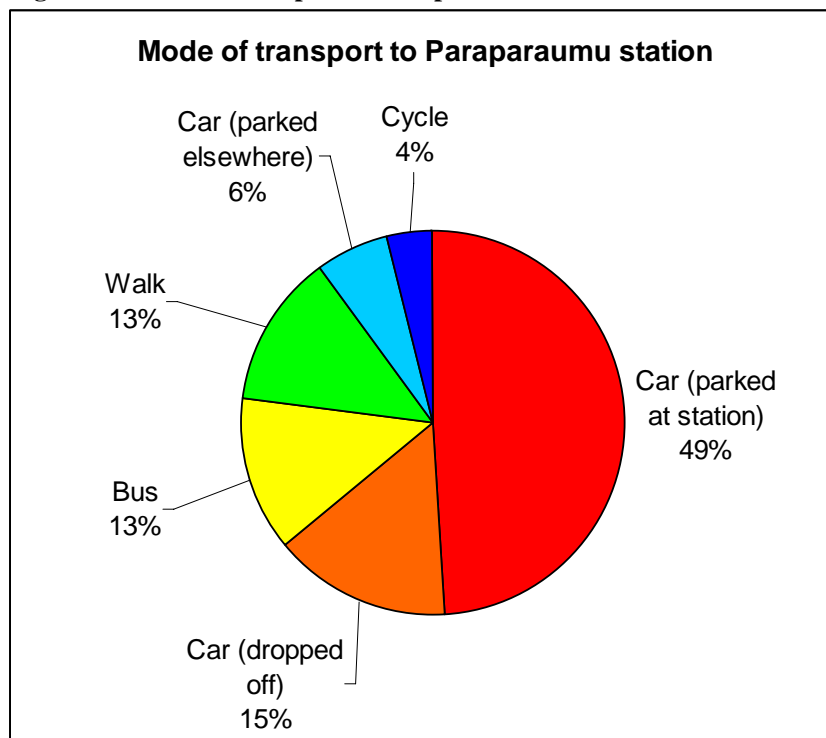
Figure 1 shows that most train users live on or near a bus route.

The survey also showed that the majority of passengers are regular users. 82% of those surveyed use the train 5 times or more per week.

When asked how they travel to the station in the morning, responses were divided as follows (Fig. 2):

- 70% of people travel by car (**49% park at the station**, 6% park elsewhere, and 15% are dropped off)
- 13% travel by bus
- 13% walk
- 4% cycle.

Figure 2. Mode of Transport to Paraparaumu Station



A similar pattern is evident in the return journey in the evenings. In total 69% travel by car (54% parked at the station) 15% by bus, 12% walk and 4% cycle.

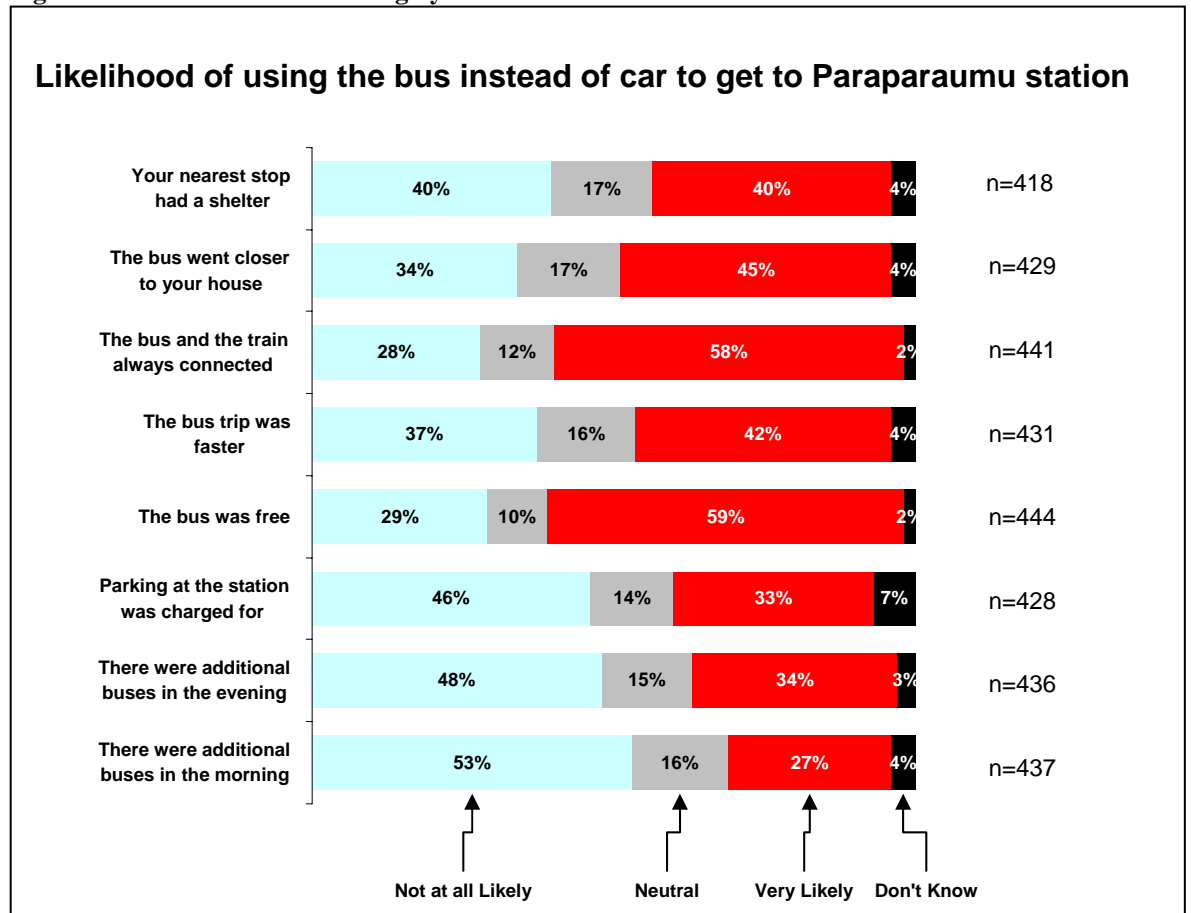
From these results we can estimate that approximately 100 people catch the bus to the station each morning, while nearly 400 people use the car to travel to the station and park in the park and ride, or nearby. These figures underestimate the actual numbers as not all the survey forms were returned.

Figures 1 and 2 indicate that despite most people living on or near a bus route few people (15%) actually use the bus to travel to the station. Additionally, many live quite close to the park and ride and yet still take their car to the

station. Other surveys² into the travel patterns of park and ride users indicate that many drive just a short distance to the park and ride.

The survey also asked whether current car users would use the bus instead, if a selection of certain actions was taken. The graph below sets out the results (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Likelihood of Travelling by Bus to the Station



Making the bus free and ensuring buses and trains always connect are the options most likely to influence behaviour and encourage more car users to use the bus rather than the car. 59% of car users said they were very likely to use the bus if it was free.

Respondents also rated 'a stop closer to their house', 'a shelter at their stop', 'a faster journey', and 'charging for parking' as important factors influencing their decision to use the bus instead of the car.

5. Station Monitoring

As can be seen from Figure 3, 58% of car users would consider using the bus if the buses and trains always connected. However, the public view the connections between buses and trains as unreliable, particularly in the evening peak. At present, data are not collected on the precise arrival and departure

² Land transport New Zealand Research Report OPSX-402. *Impediments to Walking as a Mode Choice*. Opus, March 2007.

times at Paraparaumu Station, so we cannot be sure of the reality behind this perception.

To get some information on arrival and departure times we monitored Paraparaumu station during the morning and evening peak times over the last week of August 2007³. The monitoring noted the arrival and departure times of the trains and buses as well as whether the bus/train connection was successful.

Some informal monitoring was also undertaken at our request by two members of the Kapiti Transport Action Group (KTAG) over the following week (3-7 September). These two people noted the time of departure and arrival on their train trip to and from work for the week. They also noted whether the bus/train connection was made.

5.1 Results

During the monitoring period most trains left Paraparaumu station in the morning within 5 minutes of scheduled time, except on Monday 3rd September where it was noted that the train was delayed as people had to queue to buy their monthly pass at the station. In the afternoons however, 51% of trains monitored in August (23 out of 45) were more than 5 minutes late arriving at Paraparaumu. 18% (8 trains) were 10 or more minutes late. Of the trains monitored by KTAG 90% (9 out of 10) were more than 5 minutes late and 80% were 10 or more minutes late.

33 buses out of a possible 225 in the monitored week of August waited for more than five minutes after their scheduled departure time. In some instances buses waited for over 10 minutes. Most of these were connecting with the train scheduled to arrive at 6.10pm following the Capital Connection train. From Monday to Thursday the 6.10 train did not arrive until 6.20 or later.

In the mornings every bus/train connection was made during the monitoring period. Despite the trains being regularly behind schedule, in the evenings only 26 connections (11%) were missed out of a monitored possible 235. These missed connections occurred between 4pm and 5pm – there were no missed connections recorded after 5pm. This presents little difficulty for commuters returning from Wellington, as the majority will arrive at Paraparaumu station after 5pm.

From these surveys we can see that even though the trains are often behind schedule the bus/train connection is successful most of the time, because the buses often wait longer than the timetable suggests, to make the connection possible. The morning connections seem to be more reliable than those in the afternoon.

However, the public perception is that the connections are often missed. The application of Real Time Information may improve this perception and give greater certainty to train passengers.

³ It should be noted that during the period of monitoring (27/8/07 – 7/9/07) there was a speed restriction in place on the Paraparaumu line of 2.41 minutes northbound and 2.49 minutes southbound. This speed restriction was just below average for the last year and a half.

Our monitor during the last week of August also took note of the park and ride on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th. On both days the park and ride was full by approximately 7.30am, and cars were spilling over into other unofficial parking areas.

It should be noted that the park and ride is still full by early morning even after the addition of 61 new spaces

6. Implications

The surveys indicated that car users are most likely to consider using the bus if it is free, and if the buses and trains connect. We therefore initially considered introducing free transfers between bus and train within a single zone, to be done through introducing an integrated monthly rail/bus pass (similar to the Wairarapa Plus and Hutt Plus tickets introduced recently). However, this proposal was rejected by the bus operator and therefore did not proceed.

A free transfer does however appear to be the best answer to moving people from their car to the buses and thus freeing up space in the park and ride. However, to implement this in the short term we need the agreement of the bus operator to vary the contract. If this is not possible, the requirement for an integrated ticket can be introduced into the bus contract when the route is next tendered.

Some of the other possible actions that could be taken to relieve pressure on the park and ride in Paraparaumu include:

Improve reliability of train running times – This is difficult to do in the short term, as unreliability is not due to a problem with timetables but is due to speed restrictions, breakdowns and limitations of the current infrastructure.

Increase connection times – This would increase the chance of trains arriving in time to connect with buses in the evening. However, increasing the connection times would increase layover time at the station for buses and would require extra buses at peak times. There is no benefit to be gained from this if the trains arrive outside the additional time, and as the reliability of the trains is unlikely to improve in the short term this would be ineffective.

Charge for car parking – There is some justification for doing this, as people are charged to use the bus but parking is free. The difficulty will be in the balance between discouraging people from using the park and ride and still encouraging people to use the train. One potential method is to charge a fee for local users, but keep the facility free for those from further away.

Improve bike facilities – Presently there are 44 lockers at the station – all full. Demand is greatest during the summer months when weather conditions make cycling a more attractive mode. However, in our survey cycling was the least popular mode and there are currently less than 10

people on the waiting list for lockers, which indicates that even with improvements to cycle facilities at the station we could not expect significant growth in the number of cyclists.

Free cycle use on trains – As above, this would encourage people to cycle to the station and it would also reduce the number of lockers needed.

Publicise bus services – While Greater Wellington promotes the Metlink network, little publicity has been done at a route level. Some users of the park and ride may take their cars because they are unaware of the details of the service offered by the buses. It would be relatively simple to distribute a flyer or a bus timetable to the drivers of the cars in the park and ride.

It should be noted that while this report focuses on Paraparaumu, excess demand for park and ride spaces is a region-wide problem. In many areas there is no possibility to expand the number of parks, and as in Paraparaumu many of these stations have a local bus service that could transport local train users.

It is also worth considering what limits there should be to the parking we provide, and how the best use may be made of the spaces available while still encouraging use of rail.

7. Next Steps

Staff will continue to investigate options surrounding park and ride issues.

8. Communication

None

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

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