greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Committee	Transport & Access Committee
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Real-Time Information - Pilot Phase update

1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with a brief update on the progress of the Real-Time Information project during its Pilot phase.

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

This Committee considered a detailed update at its 16 March 2010 meeting.

A live Pilot implementation is a contractual requirement for the supply of the real-time system. The Pilot is designed to prove the operation of the system in situ in Wellington, by ensuring that all scenarios and conditions are successfully dealt with. It incorporates a full assessment of system performance, and of compliance with the specified contract criteria.

Acceptance of the Pilot phase defines the final specification of the system, and is the contractual trigger for progression into the main implementation phase.

The Pilot is hosted in partnership with Go Wellington, on a number of buses by which the Route 14 (Kilbirnie to Wilton) service is provided. Although the Pilot is a test of the full system, it is intentionally conducted 'behind the scenes' with no real-time information provided to the public.

4. Pilot progress

The Pilot acceptance process is currently underway. The formal live running stage of the Pilot was begun on 3 May, two working days behind the original contract schedule. Although the minimum continuous operational requirement of 30 days was completed on 2 June, the live running continues, and will extend indefinitely into the full roll-out.

Assessment of the Pilot is conducted via a range of tests. These include:

- physical equipment acceptance tests (assessing the installation and performance of equipment and software systems)

- analysis of the whole system performance (through scenario tests and observations on, for example, arrival time prediction accuracy)

- proving of the service aspects of the system performance (for example by assessing the response to, and reporting of, simulated faults).

The operator's experience with the system is also being taken into account.

An independent external review of specific aspects of the Pilot performance is incorporated in the acceptance process. This has been commissioned to afford a complementary objective input at this critical phase.

Although the Pilot assessment is not yet complete, it can be reported that the fundamental performance of the system has been highly satisfactory, and no major issues have been encountered.

The live running inevitably exposed a small number of minor matters during the initial period of the Pilot. Examples included some reporting errors arising from the slight geographical misplacing of bus stops in the data set, and the need to make allowance for the effect of established operational practices. It has been possible to identify the cause of each minor issue, to successfully generate, agree and document a solution, and to test the outcome for accuracy and future robustness.

Although part of the Pilot scope, it has not yet been possible to demonstrate the required bus priority interface with the SCATS traffic control system. This is due partly to the complexity of satisfactory communication with the SCATS vendor, which is necessarily via Wellington City Council as the licensed SCATS user. This work is progressing and an interface specification has been agreed, but its delivery requirement has been displaced into the roll-out phase.

Some minor amendments will be made to the final system specification in the light of the Pilot experience. Acceptance of the Pilot and the contractual milestone of progression to the roll-out phase are expected in early July.

It is noteworthy that the Real-Time system supplier (ACIS Ltd), has acknowledged and places significant value on the insightful and constructive interaction of GW and Go Wellington staff throughout the process to date, particularly during the Pilot phase.

5.   Progress summary

The Pilot performance of the System has been highly encouraging. There is nothing apparent which raises concern over its acceptance in due course, or so far any reason to amend the high level timeline provided to the 16 March meeting of this Committee. This anticipates the progressive fitting of on-bus

equipment from September 2010, and the first installations of real-time display signs in October 2010.

The value of procuring an established solution has been reflected in the substantially trouble-free implementation, with only minor local adaptation issues. The Pilot phase has also demonstrated its worth in isolating and resolving these minor matters prior to the roll-out, and has already provided clear demonstrations of the potential of the system as a future tool for network optimisation and operational management.

6. Next steps

Following the Pilot acceptance, the focus changes to detailed development of the implementation phase.

A Communications Plan providing roll-out options for the implementation phase is under development. This will address questions such as the stages at which it would be most appropriate to designate the formal 'go-live' for aspects of the scheme, and identify means for their effective communication.

A Draft Communications Plan will be brought for consideration to the Committee's August meeting.

The Pilot experience has shown that the programme for fitting of the necessary on-bus equipment may be compressed by carrying out pre-wiring works. This enhances the potential for 'going live' with an operator's entire bus fleet at one time, rather than in small batches. It would therefore significantly simplify the communications task during the roll-out, and further research is in progress.

The Pilot phase has been carried out with Go Wellington under a specific Pilot participation agreement. For future operator participation the necessary provisions will be incorporated in service provision contracts, and this is being developed in parallel with the implementation planning. Since the timescale for the renegotiation or renewal of service contracts is uncertain, work is also continuing on an interim arrangement where real-time provisions are contained in a separate agreement, which would be later subsumed into service contracts.

Development of the rail aspect of the real-time project continues, and jointly with ONTRACK and ARTA, a renewed programme of activity has begun. The internal rail industry priority for developing the necessary data flows and associated processes is reflected in the development of a structured project plan, which will align with GW's indicative roll-out schedule for rail real-time. Further progress will be reported in due course.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** *the report.*

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

3.   ***Notes*** *the positive progress through the pilot phase of the project.*

4.   ***Notes*** *the development of activities relating to the scheme roll-out.*

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