



Report 10.472  
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Committee Transport & Access Committee  
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## Introduction of the Total Mobility Electronic System and implementation of other improvements

### 1. Purpose

To provide an update on the completion of the Total Mobility Electronic System and implementation of other improvements.

### 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

The Total Mobility Scheme provides subsidised taxi travel for people who cannot use regular public transport due to a disability. There are approximately 7,000 people who are members of the scheme in this region. They make approximately 240,000 Total Mobility trips a year, at a subsidy cost of almost \$2m. Further figures are provided in **Attachment 1**.

As reported to the Committee in July 2009 (**Report PE 09.434**), a review of the Total Mobility Scheme by the Ministry of Transport in 2005 recommended that all regional councils adopt a phased improvement program. Phase two of this improvement programme was to encourage regional councils to improve administrative processes and investigate ways to reduce the opportunity for fraud. The Total Mobility Electronic System is being introduced as part of these improvements. The Council 10-Year Plan 2009-19 included \$350,000 for the introduction of a new electronic system for Total Mobility.

Other phase two improvements include the introduction of contracts with assessment agencies and taxi companies, and a review of rules around the scheme.

The Committee has been updated throughout the year about the Total Mobility project, through the regular General Manager reports.

## **4. Comment**

### **4.1 Completion of the Total Mobility Electronic System**

The new Total Mobility Electronic System is now operating. All clients are now required to carry a Total Mobility photo identification card and the existing paper vouchers will be phased out over the next couple of months.

The project has been delivered in a number of stages which has enabled us to minimise the impacts of the changes on clients, assessment agencies and transport operators. The stages are summarised as follows.

#### **4.1.1 Photo identification cards issued to clients (from Feb 2010)**

The first stage of the project was to obtain photos from clients and to issue Total Mobility photo identification cards. The major challenge during this stage was to obtain photos from all existing and new clients.

We began issuing photo identification cards in February 2010 and clients were told to show their photo identification card every time they used a Total Mobility taxi. We also asked drivers to check photo identification cards whenever a client used a paper voucher, and where necessary inform them how to obtain a photo identification card.

Greater Wellington Total Mobility clients will all be required to show their identification card when using a Total Mobility service from 1 September 2010. We sent a letter earlier this month to the remaining 1,500 clients who have not yet provided a photo and will send another letter to all clients prior to the phasing out of paper vouchers.

#### **4.1.2 Assessment Agency and Transport Operator Training**

Training has been provided for assessment agencies and transport operators in their use of the new system. The opportunity for 'refresher' training in the principles and rules of the scheme was also taken with the assessment agencies.

#### **4.1.3 Streamlining of the client assessment process (from May 2010)**

The second stage of the project was to streamline client assessment processes by enabling assessment agencies to record assessments directly into the Total Mobility Electronic System, using the internet. This replaced the need to send in paper application forms and reduced the amount of processing required by Greater Wellington.

Greater Wellington and assessment agencies began processing client assessments through the new system in May 2010. A major benefit of the new system is the ability to keep information more up-to-date with assessment agencies able to directly view and update client information.

Greater Wellington has taken over the issuance of the current paper vouchers to enable assessment agencies to focus more on the needs of their clients (rather than the administrative process of issuing vouchers). Paper vouchers will be phased out from September.

#### 4.1.4 Electronic recording of taxi transactions (from 1 Sep 2010)

The third stage of the project is to record and process all taxi transactions through the new system which will streamline invoicing and payment processes and will enable detailed reporting of client and taxi transaction information for the first time.

The electronic recording of taxi transactions requires a number of changes to taxi company transaction and invoicing processes and requires new payment equipment to be installed in all Total Mobility taxis. The new equipment is based on Snapper technology which means Total Mobility cards can function as a regular Snapper payment card as well as a Total Mobility photo identification card. This will enable anyone travelling by taxi to pay for their trip using a regular Snapper card (subject to a \$2.00 electronic transaction fee).

At the time of writing we are piloting the new equipment in ten Wellington Combined taxis and this will be rolled out to other taxis from early September. Clients will need to continue using their vouchers until late September when the full equipment rollout is completed. Taxi drivers will also continue accepting paper vouchers, which are entered into the Total Mobility Electronic System, until at least the end of October 2010.

#### 4.1.5 Phasing out of paper vouchers – from September 2010

The new system will replace almost all paper vouchers with the only vouchers being those from clients travelling from other regions. We will also need to issue vouchers to clients when they travel to other regions, although the new photo identification cards will work in Auckland from 1 October 2010. Clients will be able to obtain “out of town” vouchers by calling the Metlink call centre.

#### 4.1.6 Further enhancements

The full system will be operating from September. As this is a new system further enhancements are expected over the next few months, including the development of a comprehensive suite of reports which will allow us to report information from client assessments since May 2010, and all Total Mobility transactions from 1 September 2010.

There is also a six-month warranty period from when we sign off on the full system during which any issues will be identified and fixed.

## 4.2 Other phase two improvements

A number of other improvements have also been introduced. These include:

- Contracts with all transport operators providing Total Mobility services. Contracts include provision requiring consistent service standards, driver training, and vehicle quality. Provision is also made for system audits covering processing of transactions, record keeping, and health and safety.
- Contracts with all Total Mobility assessment agencies. Contacts include provision for consistent and objective eligibility assessments.

- Training has also been provided for assessment agencies and transport operators.

## 5. **Communication**

Communications have been ongoing with clients, transport operators and assessment agencies. A further mailout is also planned to all Total Mobility clients this month to advise them of the latest changes.

## 6. **Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

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

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### **Attachment 1: Total Mobility usage statistics**