

Report 13.728
Date 6 August 2013
File TM/01/08/01

Committee Economic Wellbeing Committee
Author Alice Wills Johnson, Team Leader, Marketing and Information

Public Transport signage and information

1. Purpose

The report seeks approval for a new strategy for the provision of public transport signage and information.

2. The decision-making process and significance

The matters requiring decision in this report have been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act).

2.1 Significance of the decision

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking into account the Greater Wellington Regional Council's (Council) significance policy and decision-making guidelines. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

2.2 The decision-making process

Officers have taken into account the principles set out in section 14 of the Act and the need to manage the Council's resources prudently, and there is no process for making this decision explicitly set out in the Local Government Act 2002 or any other enactment.

Officers consider that all of the reasonably practicable options have been appropriately identified and assessed.

Officers have also considered the need to take account of the community's views and preferences in relation to this matter. Views and preferences are already known to the Council due to direct customer feedback, and customer surveys. Officers consider that, in light of their assessment of significance and the other factors relevant to the process for making this decision, any more engagement with the community to identify views and preferences, such as through formal consultation, is not warranted.

3. Background

The Council provides public transport signage and information in order to assist people to navigate the public transport network easily. This includes:

- directional signage at rail stations, carparks, and platforms
- rail station timetables and poster displays
- ferry wharf signage and shelters
- wayfinding totems (directions, maps etc)
- bus stop poles, signs, and shelters¹
- on-street timetables and poster displays (events / service information)
- real time information signs.

While these assets have been funded by the Council, transfer of the assets to Council ownership has only occurred recently (railway station buildings and signage), or is still in process (bus stop signage etc). This has provided the opportunity to review the approach to the provision of signage and information, taking a multi-modal, whole of network approach. The review was also prompted by:

- reports that public transport users and potential users can have difficulty finding a service or service information, particularly when making an unfamiliar journey. This is significant as ease of use is a key factor in attracting and keeping public transport users.
- the difficulty and expense of updating existing public transport signage, even in situations when the changes required are minor.

4. Signage and Information Review

As result of the above, a review has been undertaken with its objectives to ensure signage:

- offers information that is consistent with other Metlink information
- offers information that is easily understood by customers and passengers
- is easy to install and change following operational or service alterations
- is appropriate for the location based on standard levels of service
- is cost efficient and administratively easy to implement.

Diadem was engaged to undertake the review, based on their experience as a design-lead project management company that has planned, developed, and delivered signage and wayfinding systems for mass transportation across all modes.

4.1 Existing Signage and Information Audit

As part of the project Diadem undertook a customer experience audit which included journeys on the public transport network using existing signage and information. This reflects a user centred approach to wayfinding which starts with placing ourselves in the shoes of the customers.

¹ Note Adshel bus shelters are funded by Adshel under agreement with local councils

The audit found that signage could be improved in a number of areas:

- the size, style, and content of signage is inconsistent, particularly across modes
- names of bus stops are hard to identify, so it can be hard to know if you are at the right stop to get on or off
- bus stops are hard to spot in many locations, and look different in different places
- where there are multiple bus stops, it is hard to tell which one to use (eg at Kilbirnie)
- for the ferry service, the boarding location and the ticket office are hard to identify
- for the rail service, some stations lack external signs with the station name, and signs with information about to customer service, timetables, ticketing, platform numbers and directions to bus and ferry services are inconsistent and sometimes hard to read
- wayfinding information is often hard to read, locate, and the presentation is inconsistent
- regulatory signs are used inconsistently.

Below are examples images taken from audit.



Image 1: Multiple bus stops at Hataitai Village are difficult to identify within the streetscape



Image 2: Existing ferry service boarding location signage at Queens Wharf



Image 3: Lack of external signage at Waterloo Station

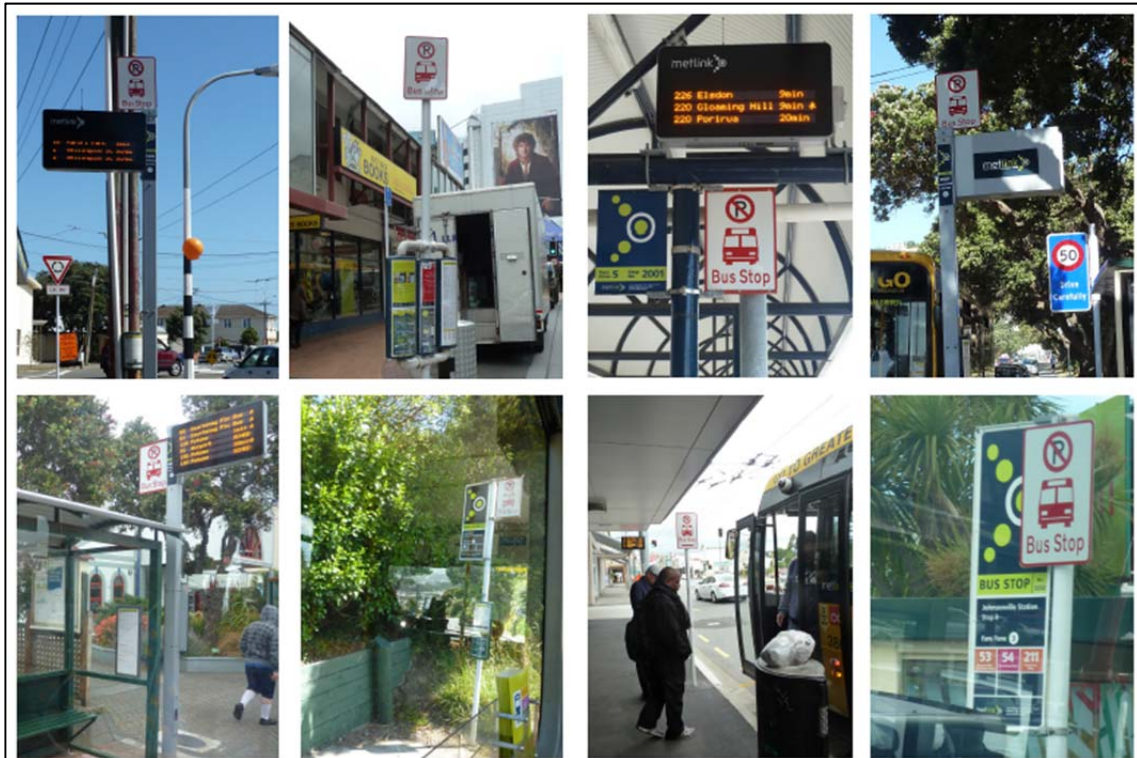


Image 4: Examples of inconsistent bus regulatory sign placement

4.2 Signage and Information Strategy

As a result of the audit, a signage and information strategy is being development which will contain the following key principles:

- providing consistent information to customers across all Metlink modes of transport by using a comprehensive and uniform wayfinding system
- a standard approach to level of service / information provision based on category of stop / station
- establishing a hierarchy of information, form and colour to clearly distinguish wayfinding elements in the environment
- providing wayfinding signage that reflects the Metlink brand to provide reassurance to customers that they are using Metlink services, and that is scaled for optimum legibility and viewing distances
- providing large external entry signs for all rail stations to confirm the station name and location and a hierarchy of identification signs, where customer service, timetables, ticketing, platform numbers and directions to bus and ferry services are defined
- providing pedestrian signage in areas with multiple bus stops that are not within viewing distance of each other, to avoid customer frustration with second guessing where their connecting bus route stop is located
- establishing a standard suite of signage that allows information to be updated in a cost effective manner if routes or systems change.

4.3 Kit of Parts

To bring the strategy to life, a 'kit of parts' has been developed for rail, bus and the harbour ferry. Below are examples of each mode's kit of parts.

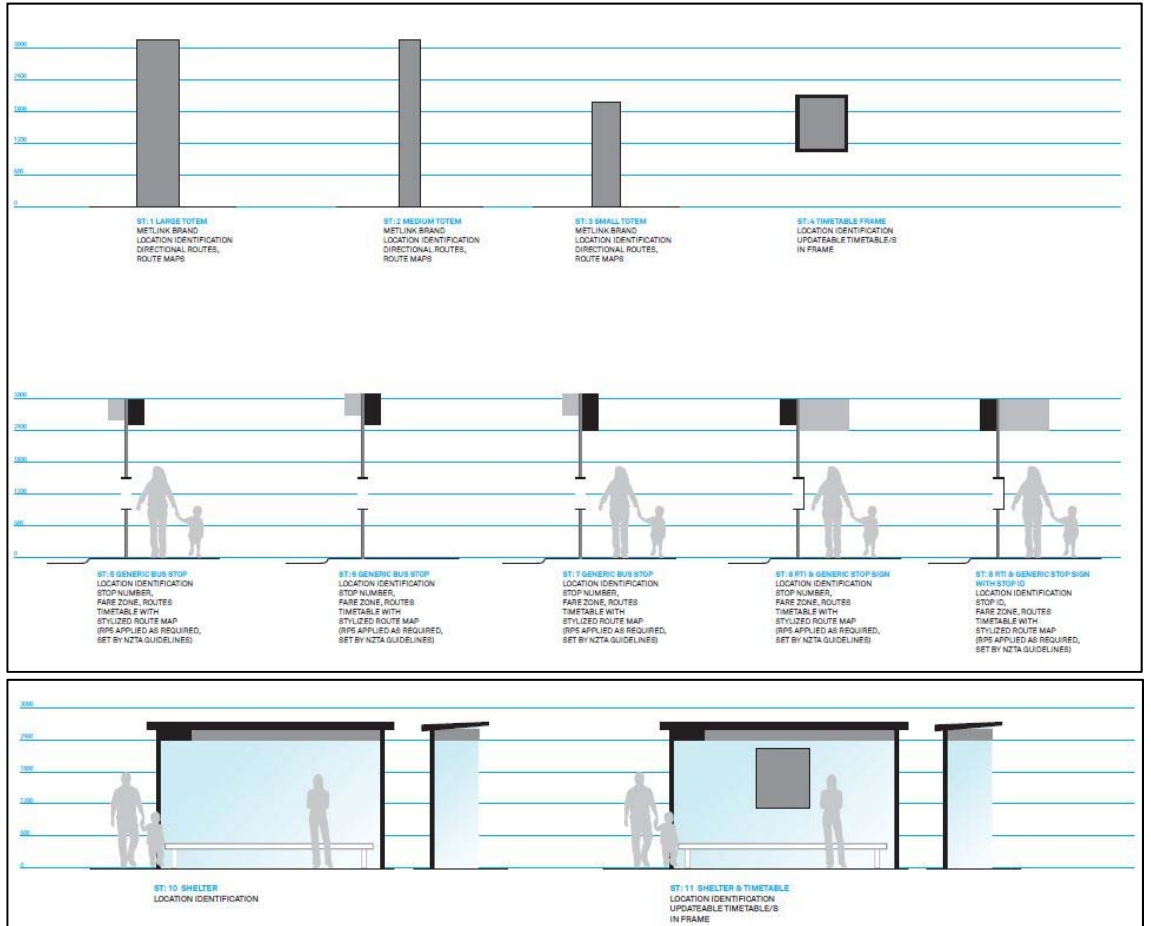


Image 5: Proposed bus kit of parts

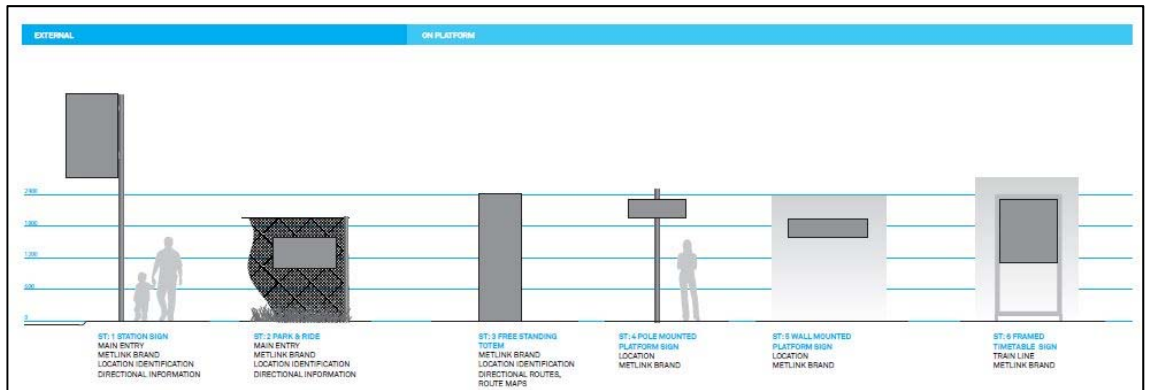


Image 6: Proposed rail kit of parts

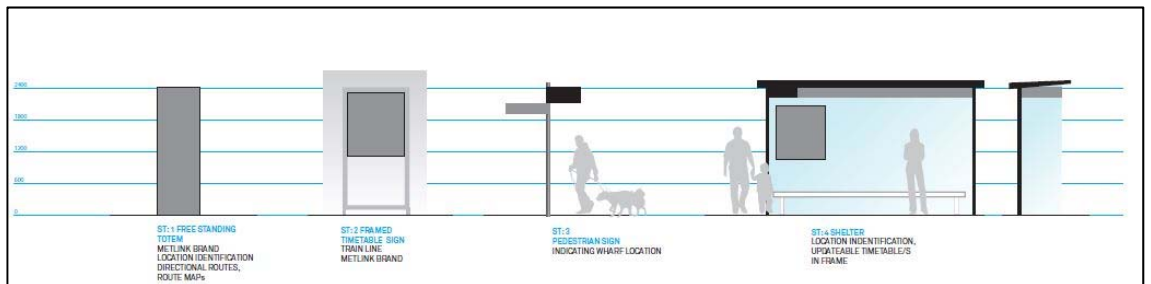


Image 7: Proposed ferry kit of parts

The following images provide examples for the look and feel of some of the proposed bus kit of parts.

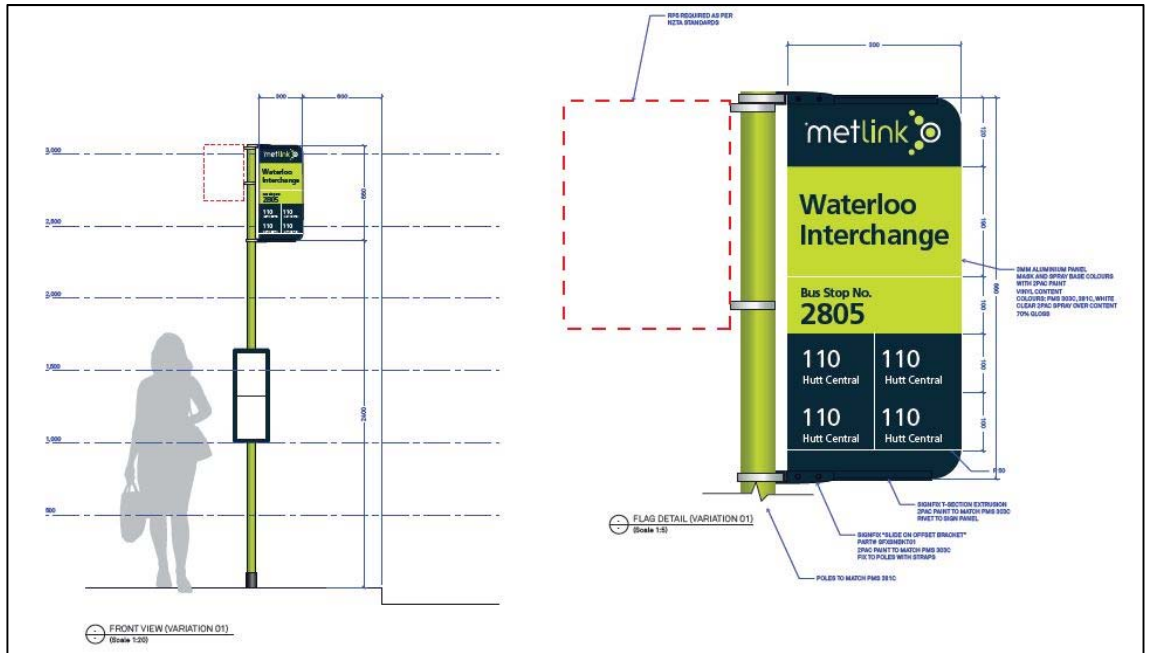


Image 8: Example of proposed generic bus stop signage

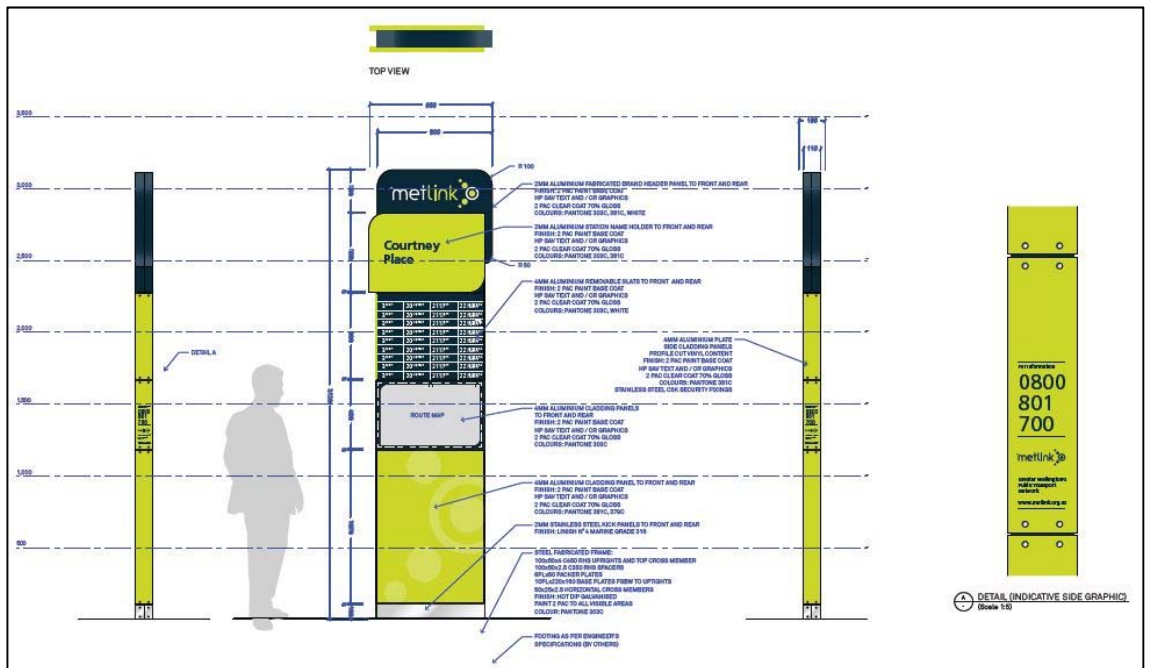


Image 9: Example of proposed large totem sign

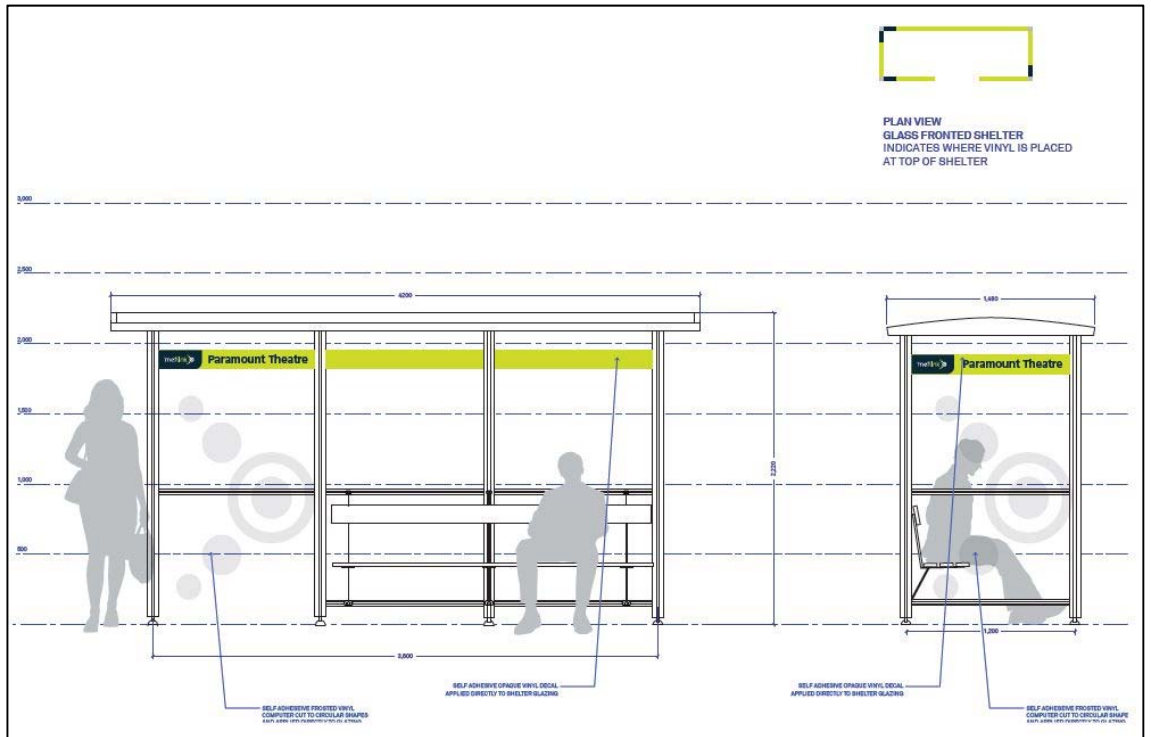


Image 10: Example of proposed bus shelter signage

The rail kit of parts was piloted as part of the Tawa Station rebuild, which is classified as a ‘medium station’. Below are images of the new signage and information at the station.



Image 11: Example of the new large totem and platform signage at Tawa Station



Image 12: Example of timetable and platform signage at Tawa Station

The harbour ferry kit of parts will be piloted at the Days Bay wharf (due for completion August 2013), and the bus kit of parts will be piloted on the Golden Mile and at Kilbirnie bus interchange.

5. Consultation with Territorial Authorities

To date, meetings have been held with Porirua City Council, Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council and Wellington City Council to outline the proposed principles for the strategy and kit of parts. Initial feedback has been very positive. Wellington City Council is undertaking internal consultation on the strategy and kit of parts and is yet to provide feedback.

As a result of the various meetings with the territorial authorities' valuable information has been received on relevant bylaws, policies and urban design guidelines will need to be taken into account in the rollout of new signage.

6. Implementation Options

Indicative scenarios for the implementation are set out below:

6.1 Gradual

Under this scenario, the new signage would be introduced only when signage needs to be replaced as a result of damage, wear and tear, or as part of improvement or renewal projects (e.g. station upgrades, new bus shelters). On the basis of existing budgets, the complete rollout would take 20 years plus.

In 2013/14, signage upgrades would be completed for the pilot projects (Kilbirnie and Days Bay), the Golden Mile (as part of the Real Time Information project), at some interchanges as part of Wellington City Bus review implementation, and where rail station upgrades are occurring. To make meaningful progress under this scenario, signage budgets would need to be increased as part of the next Long Term Plan process.

6.2 Phased with signature projects

In addition to the projects completed under the Gradual scenario, new signage and information would be provided at high use locations where passengers interchange between services or modes. The proposed locations are Wellington Railway Station and interchange, and interchanges at Queensgate, Waterloo, Petone, Porirua, and Johnsonville. The estimated cost is \$1 million to \$1.5 million (dependent on Wellington Railway Station costs) between now and 2015 (exact timing may need to be varied to take into account other projects, such as the Johnsonville Mall redevelopment).

Following the signature projects, the next phase would involve upgrading the next level of interchanges and core bus routes, with funding provided through the next Long Term Plan process.

6.3 Full roll out

Implementing new and replacement signage for all stations, ferry wharves, and bus routes to achieve improved and consistent signage immediately. The estimated cost of this scenario is \$13 million.

6.4 Recommendation

The full roll out is not recommended, as the level of expenditure required is not justified by the scale of the problem. While the phased implementation with signature projects would have a significant impact on improving the legibility and ease of use of major interchanges, funding is not available from within existing budgets. It is therefore recommended that implementation occurs on the basis of the gradual scenario.

7. Communication

No public communication is required.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Agrees that public transport information and signage should be:*
 - a. *Consistent across public transport modes*
 - b. *Based on a hierarchy of information, form, and colour*
 - c. *Reflect the Metlink brand*
 - d. *Based on a standard suite of signage (i.e. the kit of parts) which provides consistent levels of service for customers as illustrated in section 4.3 of the report*
4. *Agrees that the new approach to signage will implemented gradually using existing budgets.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:



Alice Wills Johnson
Team Leader, Marketing and
Information

Zelda Mackenzie
Manager, Customer Services



Wayne Hastie
General Manager, Public
Transport