

27 June 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-2930

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2023-137

I refer to your request for information dated 29 May 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 29 May 2023. You have requested the following:

“This is a request for the following information:

Any policies or procedures of GWRC which relate to how accessibility is considered and implemented in regards to both new public transport infrastructure projects (including but not limited to replacement of existing infrastructure) and the purchase of rebovation of rolling stock for both trains and buses.

Any discussions or decision making process about accessibility when designing and implementing the following projects (including but not limited to any communications with external groups or individuals):

Replacement of station infrastructure such as platform buildings and seating currently underway. Replacement of screens displaying timetable information in Wellington Central Station and how that information is displayed.

Design of Snapper terminals for use at train stations, including how they display and communicate information.

How appropriate lighting levels are determined for GWRC transport hubs (including but not limited to Central Wellington Station Bus hub and train stations throughout the region). When lights activate at transport hubs GWRC is responsible for (including but not limited to Central Wellington Bus hub and train stations throughout the region)”

On 8 June 2023 you agreed to rescope the second part of your request to provide you with relevant information (as opposed to discussions and decisions made) relating to:

- Replacement of Wellington City station screens
- Design of Snapper terminals at train stations
- How lighting levels are determined for transport hubs
- When lights activate at transport hubs

Greater Wellington's response follows:

Policies on accessibility

Metlink's Regional Public Transport Plan

Metlink's Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) sets out our vision for the public transport network over the next 10 years. The RPTP has a strategic priority to achieve an efficient, accessible and low carbon public transport network. The RPTP contains policies and associated actions relating to provision of accessible services, information, assets, and infrastructure. The RPTP can be viewed on the Greater Wellington website here:

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2021/10/J001366-Public-Transport-Plan-v5-web.pdf>.

You may be particularly interested in:

- Strategic Priority (Page 9)
- How we will improve the accessibility of public transport for all users (Page 11)
- Section 5.9 Supporting the transport disadvantaged (starting page 79)
- Section 6.7 Providing for people with limited access to public transport (starting page 95)

If you search the RPTP using the terms 'accessible' and 'accessibility' you will find that these have been woven throughout the narrative of the document as it is a key consideration for Metlink when designing the service.

Metlink's Accessibility Charter

Metlink also has an Accessibility Charter which can be viewed here: www.metlink.org.nz/accessibility. It sets focus areas for our work on the accessible journey. Metlink has an associated Accessibility Action Plan which will give effect to the charter and has been created in a co-design approach with sector and community representatives and staff from the Metlink network. The Action Plan will be run and reviewed annually. The first instalment is currently in its final stage of development and will be published in the near future.

In regard to refurbishment of buses on our network, Metlink has required the operators to alter the internal layout of 79 buses to improve accessibility and in order to meet our standards. These standards are set out in our Bus Partnering Contract, Schedule 4 – Vehicle Quality Standards available on the Metlink website: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/assets/Contracts/Schedules-2-15-Nov-22.pdf> (starting page 59). Examples of some of the changes made by operators are:

- Increasing the aisle width between the front wheels
- Changing transverse wheelchair positions to rear facing
- Improved space for the wheelchair
- More handrails in the priority seating area; and
- Improved location of priority seating.

Metlink's Asset Management Plan

Metlink's 2022 Asset Management Plan (AMP) communicates our investment plans for the prudent management of our public transport network assets for the period 2022 to 2051. The investment plans contained within the AMP promote efficiency, inclusive access to public transport for all, increased mode shift to public transport, resilience, and security by managing the risks to our network from natural and human-made hazards, and contributing to the transition of New Zealand to a net zero carbon emissions' nation. The AMP can be viewed on the Greater Wellington website here: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2022/09/Metlink-2022-Asset-Management-Plan.pdf>

Please refer to the AMP which contains information relevant to each of your questions below. If you search the document using the terms 'accessible' and 'accessibility', you can see that it is a key consideration in the management of our assets and infrastructure.

Information on replacement of station infrastructure and platform buildings and seating

Recently we have set internal desired standards for station infrastructure to provide at least 1m² of shelter per typical peak passenger using the station. As a result of this, we have been expanding the extent of shelter provided at a number of stations, and we will continue this programme of improving shelter provision over the coming few years.

Similarly, we have also set a desired standard of providing 1 seat for every 4 peak passengers at our railway stations. Not all of our stations currently provide this level of seating, and hence we have commenced a programme to help enable this objective.

Bus infrastructure assets are replaced when the asset is end of life, this being age, condition or function, passenger numbers and demographic of the area are also considered.

Information on replacement of Wellington Station screens

The digital screens which show the service line and time of scheduled departure in the Wellington railway station were replaced upon reaching their "end-of-life". Sizes of screens on platforms were constrained due to minimum overhead height and platform edge clearance requirements. Main station entrance screens were sized at the maximum allowable size by approval of Heritage New Zealand and KiwiRail, as owners of the building.

Screen visual design concepts and audio announcement scripts were developed from industry best practice guidelines and enhanced with feedback from a variety of public transport users at Wellington Station, including those with mobility, visual and other impairments. Historical records of feedback via the Metlink Contact Centre, online forms and train station customer service staff were also used for scoping the design of the screens and announcements. Continuous improvement processes are in place to further improve the system and address ongoing feedback from customers, including those with disabilities or impairments.

Screen design is based on a black-text-on-white-background principle for maximum contrast, with colour coding per train line for easier recognition. Line departures are organised per train line on screens in static positions for two reasons: to aid individuals with visual or cognitive impairment to more easily find the section of the screen that is relevant to them, and to make it easier for all users to compare upcoming departures on their line to aid decision-making (all-stops versus express, or another departure soon enough that they can use toilets, visit supermarket or not feel the need to rush down the platform).

Graphics of the stops on each service were introduced to the screen design to help customers determine if that train's express stopping pattern was going to their intended destination.

Solid and soft-flashing colour boxes with platform numbers for departing services were designed to be a better indication to those with impaired vision or hearing (or those at a further distance from the screens, such as in the subway) when a train was soon due to depart.

Information on design of Snapper terminals at train stations

Snapper terminals at rail stations utilise the same long-established validator device as is used on buses, which have been designed to ensure that customers with visual impairments are provided with suitable colours, contrast and symbols when interacting with them. Customers with aural impairments are provided with suitable sounds relating to specific actions, and with messages providing notification or instruction as necessary.

The housing for the Snapper terminal on rail stations is designed to comply with the relevant guidance in terms of its height, legibility and illumination at night, while also ensuring it is sufficiently robust to withstand misuse such as intentional vandalism.

The positioning of platform validators is unique to each station as it depends on the way each station is used, including the stopping position of trains, the location of access points, and the levels of usage at different times of day. Validators are located to ensure that any peak-time queuing does not result in unsafe bunching of customers close to platform edges or other hazards and are deliberately away from the top or bottom of stairs or ramps to ensure they can be used safely by customers using wheelchairs. Finally, where possible validators are positioned in line with or close to existing infrastructure to prevent them becoming a tripping or collision hazard, and each location is marked on the ground by an area of tactile markers to assist customers with visual impairments.

Information on how lighting levels are determined for transport hubs

During initial concept design of a transport hub, the appointed structural engineer initiates a lighting assessment of the area to establish the existing street light limits (lux levels). Depending on that result and any concern of obstruction or reduction of streetlights due to a new structure, there would be a decision to increase the number of streetlights or change the luminaries to increase the levels of lux or no changes are required

The current hub shelter design incorporates LED lighting which meets AS/NZS 1158.3.1:2020. Each strip light installed is providing 1400 lumens.

For our railway stations, the following for lighting standards apply:

- Our target average lux level is 50.
- Uniformity 0.40 minimum
- Lighting is determined using a predictive isoplot design, completed by a lighting specialist.
- Lights are activated with day/night sensors and run continuously during hours of darkness for safety and security.

Information on when lights activate at transport hubs

Lights within bus hub shelter structures are activated by power timer switches that switch the power on and off during certain times of the day, which are pre-set and can be adjusted.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Samantha Gain

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Waka-ā-atea | Group Manager Metlink