

## **Greater Christchurch Mass Rapid Transit Interim Report June 2021**

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **1. What is Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)?**

Rapid transit is a step up from conventional public transport, being a quick, frequent, reliable and high-capacity public transport service that operates on a permanent route (road or rail) that is largely separated from other traffic.

#### **2. In a nutshell, what does this interim Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) report show?**

The interim report shows further investigation into a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) route is warranted. The scenarios investigated show that MRT may be feasible in Greater Christchurch, but it would need to be supported by more intensive population growth near stations along the route.

#### **3. What were the scenarios investigated and was there one that came out better than the others?**

The report explored three scenarios that would connect communities along the north and south-western corridors to the city:

- A heavy rail scenario – with limited stop opportunities but very competitive travel times;
- A street running scenario (using bus rapid transit) with limited stops, focusing on competitive travel times and generally following the motorway corridors;
- A street running (using light rail) scenario with more frequent stops, focusing on more households within the walk-up catchment at the expense of travel time competitiveness, and generally following urban arterials of Riccarton Road and Papanui Road.

No clear picture has yet emerged about whether one of the scenarios presents a more compelling case; each offer advantages and disadvantages.

#### **4. Is Greater Christchurch ready for a Mass Rapid Transit system?**

Initial tests that show the current forecast land-use distribution would result in low utilisation of capacity provided by MRT. However, a re-allocation of future growth towards rapid transit corridors – which would be encouraged, in part, by the MRT investment itself – would enhance the competitiveness of such a system.

Demand modelling based on this reallocated growth along the northern and south-western corridors suggests that MRT could attract enough ridership to warrant further investigation. Investment will however, be sizeable.

In summary the report shows MRT needs to be supported with population growth near stations along the route, which is why the Greater Christchurch partners believe the next phase of the work needs to be fully integrated with the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan.

#### **5. Who created this report?**

The report was prepared by a consultant team led by WSP NZ for Waka Kotahi acting on behalf of itself and the local councils of the Greater Christchurch partnership i.e. Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Waimakariri District Council, Selwyn District Council and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

#### **6. Why is the Greater Christchurch partnership looking into MRT?**

Christchurch aspires to be a low-carbon city with transport choices, good urban amenity, and strong economic performance. The partnership believes public

transport has a key role to play in realising this and wanted an investigation with a long-term focus, to consider the role of rapid transit in Greater Christchurch.

**7. What are the next steps?**

Rapid transit will be a city-shaping investment for Greater Christchurch that can help it achieve the urban form it aspires to. The interim report finds that utilisation of MRT is highly dependent on the intensity of land-use it services and recommends that the next phase of the business case aligns its development with the development of the Greater Christchurch spatial plan.