

Report 13.44
Date 12 February 2013
File TD/04/05/01

Committee Economic Wellbeing
Author Jared Humm, Policy Adviser

Cycles on trains policy - review

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present findings of the recent review of the cycles on trains policy, and seek agreement on a change to the policy.

2. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report have a medium degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

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). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

2.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have medium significance.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

3. Background

In 2010 a new policy for the carriage of cycles on trains was adopted in response to the impending introduction of the new Matangi train fleet which have space for cycles located within the general passenger area.

Key elements of the policy are:

- cycles are carried free of charge
- folding cycles can be carried at all times
- cycles can be carried at all times on the GanzMavag trains
- cycles are prohibited from peak time services travelling in the peak direction when these services are operated by Matangi trains
- GanzMavag trains are scheduled to operate two peak services on the Hutt and Kapiti lines.

Folding cycles reduce the pressure on limited cycle parking facilities at train stations, as well as the limited space for cycles on trains. They also enable cycle/train commuters to become integrated with most bus services. When the policy was adopted, the Council provided a scheme which provided a subsidy for the purchase of folding cycles of \$50 per cycle until 31 December 2011.

An operational review of the policy has now been undertaken, including consultation with KiwiRail, key groups, organisations, and an online survey.

4. Issues identified

The main issues identified in the review were:

- The exclusion of cycles from peak trains was the most significant issue raised by cyclists
- Cyclists were also concerned about the limited number of cycles allowed per train, and requested that it be increased, at least in some circumstances
- Operational changes mean that KiwiRail can no longer guarantee Ganz Mavag trains for specific services, meaning that under the current policy the ability of cyclists to use trains for commuting is weakened
- Since the introduction of the policy, new trains have been introduced and train passenger loadings have changed.

These issues are discussed further below. A number of operational implementation issues were also raised – for example, some aspects of the policy were not well understood by on train staff, resulting in some inconsistent decisions being taken. This has been addressed by internal communication and by changes to the information provided on trains and on the Metlink website.

In addition, feedback covered a number of related issues not addressed in the policy, including cycle lockers, and the voucher scheme for folding cycles.

5. Cycles on peak services

Under the 2010 policy, cycles were prohibited from 55 specifically identified peak services when these services are operated by Matangi trains. A review of passenger loadings undertaken as part of the review suggested that the Melling line would be suitable to allow cycles on board trains at all times. Similarly, the Johnsonville Line had already been removed from the peak service ban. Based upon loading information, and as there had been no significant issues reported, it was decided to keep this arrangement in place.

To provide some reliable access to peak travel for cyclists, the policy stated that GanzMavag trains would be scheduled to operate two services in each peak on the Hutt and Kapiti lines. During 2012, KiwiRail communicated that it would no longer be able to guarantee what services a Ganz Mavag may operate on, largely due to the increasing number of Matangi and the decreased number of Ganz Mavag trains. This meant cyclists could no longer rely on being able to take their bikes on specific services.

To address this, an initial trial was put in place on the Hutt line, allowing cycles to be taken on specific peak services regardless of the type of train operating. Feedback from KiwiRail staff led to this trial being extended in November, so that there are currently two services inbound in the morning, and two services outbound in the evening on each of the Hutt and Kapiti lines. KiwiRail has reported that there have been no negative impacts from the trial, from both a passenger and staff perspective.

As a result of these changes, cycles are currently allowed on the following services:

- all Johnsonville, Melling, and Wairarapa services
- all off-peak services. Cycles can also be taken on outbound peak services in the morning, and inbound peak services in the evening
- two services inbound (morning) and two services outbound (evening) on each of the Hutt and Kapiti lines, as part of the trial.

This has reduced the number of services where cycles are prohibited when services are operated by Matangi trains to 37, a reduction of approximately 33%.

5.1 Survey results

During February 2013, a short survey was carried out to determine the public reaction to the peak time trial. A link to the survey was distributed to key contacts in the Wellington cycling community, and this was followed by distribution of a handout at Wellington Station. It was particularly important to gain the view of non-cyclists, as a change in policy has as much effect on them as on cyclists.

In general, respondents seemed to support allowing cycles on trains. Where there were problems, they were mainly associated with peak periods. Most

people supported allowing cycles on all train services, although it must be noted most respondents indicated that they take their cycle on a train. A quarter of respondents favoured not allowing cycles on peak trains, other than selected services, while 15 percent favoured not allowing cycles on trains at all.

The survey had not closed at the time of writing, and a more in-depth analysis of the survey results will be presented at the Committee meeting.

5.2 Using cycle spaces until loadings are up

Allowing cycles on peak train services between stations where loadings allow (ie cycles get off the train when it becomes full) was considered. KiwiRail sees problems with this approach as onboard staff would have to remove passengers from trains, potentially causing delays, and creating conflict. It is also difficult to know when/where a train will become fully loaded on a daily basis as it varies, which creates an issue around ticketing, especially as there is no scope for a refund.

It is therefore not recommended that the policy is changed to allow cycles to complete part of a journey on peak trains.

5.3 Options

The following options have been identified for cycles on peak services:

1. Allow cycles on all train services on all lines at all times, unless train staff consider crowding may cause a safety issue
2. Make the current trial permanent – ie exclude cycles from peak services on the Hutt and Kapiti lines when those services are provided by Matangi, except for the following:
 - 7.02 & 8.05am from Waikanae
 - 7.00 & 8.00am from Upper Hutt
 - 4.15 & 4.55pm from Wellington to Waikanae
 - 4.17 & 5.07pm from Wellington to Upper Hutt
3. Do not allow cycles on any peak services on the Hutt and Kapiti lines, but allow cycles on the Johnsonville, Melling, and Wairarapa lines at all times.

It is recommended that the current trial, allowing cycles on all train services on the Johnsonville, Melling and Wairarapa lines and excluding them from peak services on the Hutt and Kapiti lines (except for selected services) be embedded as a permanent change. This option provides balance between the need to provide access to peak trains for cyclists while maximising passenger capacity on the networks busiest lines.

In addition, it is proposed that a review of passenger loadings takes place at least annually to ensure that the services earmarked for cyclists are the most suitable for cyclists and non-cyclists alike.

6. Increasing the number of cycles per train

The policy states that:

- for Matangi - a maximum of three cycles will be carried in each two car set, but train staff may use their discretion to accept child bikes or combination of adult and child bikes totalling more than three cycles where they can be stored safely.
- for Ganz Mavag – a maximum of two cycles will be carried in the dog box for each two car set.

6.1 Matangi

Feedback identified that the three cycle limit often hinders groups and families, especially on weekends when services are normally operated by just one train set, in spite of the discretion to adjust numbers where they fit.

Making use of empty wheelchair, and other, spaces during quieter periods to allow more cycles to be taken on one train set was suggested. A number of issues have been identified in relation to allowing cycles to be stored in unused wheelchair spaces, through consultation with KiwiRail and the disability community.

The cycle storage spaces have restraining straps which would need to be installed into the wheelchair spaces to allow effective restraint of cycles. There are health and safety implications with having un-tethered cycles on board and in the blocking of aisles. In addition to the costs of doing this, there are also issues with actively turning space designated for use by disabled passengers into a space for cyclists, even if disabled passengers are given priority.

Onboard staff are keen to avoid using their discretion in such instances, as past experience shows that this causes confusion and conflict, particularly when passengers do not understand why different decisions were made at different times. In addition, during weekends it is often younger and elderly people who use the trains, meaning ease of access and health and safety concerns are paramount.

It is important that disabled people do not have access to public transport marginalised, as they typically have less independent access to private motor vehicles than non-disabled persons. The Human Rights Commission in the Accessible Journey report stated that the lack of accessible public land transport is one of the biggest barriers to active participation in society faced by disabled people today. There is a risk that use of wheelchair spaces could be seen as sending the wrong message.

It is also important to consider that as the surrounding accessibility infrastructure (for example, stations and footpaths) are progressively improved

more wheelchair users will use the spaces on trains. It would therefore be prudent to avoid setting a precedent that could disrupt this in future.

It is therefore recommended that the current maximum number of cycles and policy of restricting cycles to currently designated areas on board trains be retained.

6.2 Ganz Mavag

The possibility of increasing the number of cycles carried in the dogbox has been investigated and found to be impossible due to health and safety issues – there is an overriding need for the driver to be able to exit the cab without delay in the case of an emergency.

It is therefore recommended that the current maximum number of cycles per two car set is retained.

6.3 Related issues

A trial is currently being held that provides bicycle hooks in the luggage van of one of the Wairarapa train sets, making it possible to safely accommodate four cycles. Additionally, more space for overflow luggage has been made in the servery, potentially allowing more space for cycles.

7. Communication

Once a change to the policy has been decided upon, a new “cycles on trains” policy brochure will be commissioned. The current brochure is out of date, but it was felt it would be a better use of resources to wait until the conclusion of the trial, and a decision on the future policy being made, before a new one was produced.

In addition, the policy webpage will be updated (a link to the page will be in the brochure, allowing detailed information to be put on the website and making the brochure easier to read).

If required, stickers outlining the policy onboard trains will be updated to reflect changes.

In keeping with the process adopted throughout the policy review process, cycling interest groups will be contacted, which will allow us to effectively communicate the changes with the cycling community.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*
- 3. Notes the following operational improvements:*

- a. *Cycle hook trial in luggage van on Wairarapa services*
 - b. *Changes to online information and on board train information*
 - c. *An increase in the number of trains available for use by cyclists at peak times, with no restrictions on the Johnsonville, Melling and Wairarapa lines.*
4. **Notes** that a review of passenger loadings will take place at least annually
 5. **Notes** the successful trial allowing cycles to be taken on selected Hutt and Kapiti line peak services regardless of train type
 6. **Approves** the following responses to the review:
 - a. *The amendment of the policy for the carriages of cycles on trains so that cycles can be taken on the following peak hour services, irrespective of train type:*
 - *7.02 & 8.05am from Waikanae*
 - *7.00 & 8.00am from Upper Hutt*
 - *4.15 & 4.55pm from Wellington to Waikanae*
 - *4.17 & 5.07pm from Wellington to Upper Hutt.*
 - b. *Retaining the existing maximum numbers of cycles per two car set.*

Report prepared by:



Jared Humm
Policy Adviser

Report approved by:



Tass Larsen
Manager, Projects and
Planning

Report approved by:



Wayne Hastie
General Manager, Public
Transport