15 March 2012

the architectural centre inc.
PO Box 24178 Wellington

Re: GWRC: Wellington City Bus Services Review

This submission is from the Wellington Architectural Centre, a group which represents both professional and non-professionals interested in architecture and design, and in the promotion of good design in Wellington. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Multi-modal public transport

1) We acknowledge that there is need for rethinking Wellington's public transport, and consider that this must be from a cross-modal position. Therefore we encourage the Greater Wellington Regional Council to use the redesign of the bus route to enable the anticipation of light rail and hence operate to prepare specific routes as light rail corridors. We therefore support the intention to give core service routes a sense of permanence and so assist in encouraging transit-oriented development.

Ticketing and Transfer infrastructure

2) We also believe that an integrated ticketing system is critical to the long term persuasion of more of the public to use public transport. Therefore we strongly endorse the introduction of a transfer system, and the use of transfer stations, which we also believe will provide an infrastructure supportive in the long term of light rail. The Architectural Centre advocates for excellent design of these transfer stations, so that they can manage large numbers of people in ghastly weather, and we strongly urge that these be built prior to the change to bus routes and introduction of transfer rides. If these stations are not cherished by the public we fear that there will be a negative effect on the patronage of public transports. We also strongly support transfers across public transport operators and different modes of public transport. We need a seamless system which makes public transport not just easy but pleasureable and more convenient that private car travel. We also strongly encourage the council to work with other regional councils nationally, and central government, to ensure the introduction of a national travel card which enables holders to access all forms of public transport throughout the country.

Route philosophy

3) It would help in accessing the current proposal to understand the decision-making. How have key issues such as population density, socio-economic class, the location of civic infrastructure (e.g. the hospital) and Wellington's terrain influenced the changes to bus routes. Wellington's terrain is not an insignificant issue as people travelling distances that also involve large hills are more likely to drive cars if no public transport is available than those with a flat bike ride or walk to work.

We also query whether the CBD routes ought to be split. One of the current benefits of the CBD bus routing is that bus users know that there will be a bus once every 2-5min along a single route during the working week. Will splitting the route reduce the frequency along the Golden Mile?

Trolley vs Diesel

4) The trolley buses use a more sustainable energy source, and the apparent reduction of these in the proposed scheme is a negative. We recommend wiring some of the streets which will experience an increase in buses such as: The Terrace, Ghuznee St, Miramar Ave and Ira St.

Specific Routes

5) It appears that there is reduced capacity for travel from the city to the airport, requiring public transport users to use the much much more expensive Airport Flyer than routes such as the current no. 11. It also appears that the Campus connection

linking Massey University, Victoria University and Weltec campuses is to be discontinued, and consultation with the universities and their respective student associations should be undertaken before such a route is disestablished. We believe that these routes play an important part in linking key civic infrastructure and should be continued.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this proposal for changing Wellingon City bus routes. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Christine McCarthy
President
The Architectural Centre
arch@architecture.org.nz