

Park and Ride and Shuttle Bus Service 2015/16

TO Mercury Bay Community Board
FROM Allan Tiplady - Programme Manager
DATE 29 September 2015
SUBJECT **Park and Ride and Shuttle Bus Service 2015/16**

1 Purpose of Report

To review and decide on the level of service to be provided for the 2015/16 summer season for the Hahei to Cathedral Cove Park and Ride service and the Ferry Landing to Hot Water Beach Shuttle Bus Service.

2 Background

Both services have been operated over the December to February summer seasons since the 2009/10 year. They are committed to operate for the 2015/16 through a contract from Waikato Regional Council (WRC) to Murphy Buses with a funding subsidy from the New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA). The service has also been subsidised by the Mercury Bay Community Board.

The long term provision of the service needs to be considered and will be the subject of a separate detailed report in November 2015.

At this point the Community Board is asked to provide guidance on the details related to the provision of the service for the 2015/16 year and its funding.

3 Issue

The following are the key issues that require guidance from the Community Board in respect of each service.

- 1) Period of operation.
- 2) Hours of operation.
- 3) Timetables / frequency.
- 4) Stopping / pick up points.
- 5) Fares.
- 6) Costs / funding.

4 Discussion

The following discussion relates to each of the issues above.

1) Period Of Operation

The following table sets out the service provided in the 2014/15 summer and the options for the 2015/16 service.

	2014/15 Service	2015/16 Option 1	2015/16 Option 2	2015/16 Option 3
Operating Period	Sunday 28 December 2014 to Monday 26 January 2015	Sunday 27 December 2015 to Sunday 24 January 2016	Sunday 27 December 2015 to Monday 1 February	Sunday 27 December 2015 to Sunday 24 January plus Auckland

	plus Waitangi weekend.	plus Waitangi weekend.	2016 plus Waitangi weekend.	Anniversary weekend and Waitangi weekend.
Length of Service	33 days	32 days	39 days	35 days
TCDC Subsidy after crediting back WRC & NZTA surplus	\$39,374	\$12,443	\$15,164	\$13,609
Days within 2 hours of low tide		21	27	22

The service for 2015/16 is complicated by Auckland Anniversary weekend falling on the weekend of 30 January to 1 February. If the service was extended to cover the whole of the week before this the total number of days would grow to 39 (compared to last year's 33). This would still be in the school holiday period as the 2016 year will start in the week 1 - 5 February 2016. This is Option 2 above. A further option would be to stop the service on 24 January and run it again only for the 3 days of Auckland Anniversary weekend (as well as Waitangi weekend). This would mean the total number of days of 35 compared to last year's 33.

Also, in 2014/15 a New Year's Eve service was provided. As this was very poorly patronised it is proposed to discontinue it for 2015/16.

The table above also shows the net Mercury Bay Community Board subsidy that would be needed for each service if the fare increases proposed under sections 5 and 6 of this report are agreed.

It is proposed that option 2 be approved, meaning a service will be provided for a 39 day period from 27 December to 1 February plus Waitangi weekend. This will ensure cover for the whole of the school holiday period.

A further report, to be prepared for the November meeting of the Community Board, will address the long term provision of the services, including the period immediately following the end of this years' service.

Hours of Operation

Previous years hours of operation have been 10am to 6pm for both services.

Suggestions have been made that the shuttle service should be related more to the Hot Water Beach low tide times and the Park and Ride run later allowing for people to take advantage of daylight saving.

An assessment has been undertaken of the low tide times that visitors would be able to be at the Hot Water Beach over the period of each option. These have been assessed as the period within two hours of low tide if using the shuttle bus to get there and return. The following table sets these out.

Number of Days within 2 hours of low tide	Number of Days Service Provided
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Option 1	21	32
Option 2	27	39
Option 3	22	35

The service will most likely attract lower numbers on the days when visitors cannot be at Hot water Beach at low tide time. An option would be to amend the hours of operation of the bus service to make it possible to access the beach at low tide on all days. On some days this would mean starting the service earlier and on others finishing at a later time. This could be included in the publicity, but would create some confusion with visitors with different times of operation on different days. This is not recommended.

At a consultation meeting with Hot Water Beach stakeholders the collective view was that the shuttle should operate later than it has in the past. If it still started at 10am each morning extending the hours would mean additional cost / subsidy from the Community Board.

The Hahei Stakeholders Group has also made some suggestions regarding the Park and Ride service. These include some efficiencies in relation to the parking attendants engaged, but also that the service should be provided over the 4 day Easter period (25 - 28 March 2016). This would also mean additional cost / subsidy from the Community Board.

The Hahei Stakeholders Group have also made a number of suggested improvements in the event the service is provided via a commercial operator in future years. These suggestions will be referred to the report to be done on the long term future of the services to be presented at a later meeting of the Community Board.

It is proposed that no change be made to the hours of operation for either the Park and ride and Shuttle Bus services for the 2015/16 summer service.

Timetables / Frequency

In the review of the 2014/15 service an issue was identified with the shuttle bus timetable. The timetable was very tight and at times, especially when there were heavy passenger loads and high traffic volumes, was not kept up with. In planning discussions for the 2015/16 service the bus company has proposed that the 40 minutes each way, rather than the previous 30 minutes, would be more achievable. This would mean daily return trips would reduce from 8 to 6.

The park and ride service is a continuous service so not affected by timetables.

It is proposed that the frequency be amended to 40 minute intervals for the Shuttle bus service.

2) Stopping / Pick Up Points

There have been suggestions that for the Shuttle Service there should be more bus stops in some locations. In the past the stops have been at the Cooks Beach shops and the Hahei shops. The central beach areas at Cooks Beach and Hahei Beach have been suggested as additional stops. The Hahei Beach proposal is not recommended as the bus would need to do a U-turn and there would not be space to do this, particularly in busy times when there is high traffic volumes and congestion. Another suggestion is that the service be a "flag down" service only. If this were implemented it would still need to be at designated bus stops but there could be more of them on the assumption that there would not always be passengers at all stops. The risk with this is that in the busy periods there could be passengers at all the stops that would delay the bus and cause it to get behind schedule.

It is proposed that an additional bus stop be approved for the Cooks Beach central beach area.

3) Fares

2014/15 fares for the services were:
Hahei Park and Ride return fare only:

- Adults \$3
- Children \$2
- Family \$7

Shuttle Bus:

	One Way	Return
• Adult	\$3	\$6
• Child	\$2	\$4
• Family	\$7	\$14

The fares have a direct impact on the level of subsidy from the Community Board. The fares have been kept at a low and constant level and it has been suggested that an increase would be appropriate and would not attract customer resistance. If they were to be increased it is suggested they be to rounded figures that simplify the cash transactions. The following table sets out a possible new fare structure.

2015/16 fares:

Hahei Park and Ride return fare only:

- Adults \$5
- Children \$3
- Family \$10

Shuttle Bus:

	One Way	Return
Adult	\$5	\$10
Child	\$3	\$6
Family	\$10	\$20

Costs / Funding

Attachment A sets out in detail the 2014/15 expenditure and income and projections for 2015/16 for Options 1, 2 and 3 which have different periods that the services could run for, and also the fare increases as set out under Section 5 of this report above.

The following table is a summary of those figures.

	Deficit / Surplus -	WRC / NZTA	TCDC
2014/15			
Shuttle	40,148	11,674	28,474
Park & Ride	4,517	-6,383	10,900
Total	44,665	5,291	39,374
Option 1 - 32 Days			
Shuttle	35,781	9,220	26,561
Park & Ride	-23,338	-17,713	-5,625
Total	12,443	-8,494	20,936
Option 2 - 39 Days			
Shuttle	43,608	11,236	32,372
Park & Ride	-28,444	-21,588	-6,856
Total	15,164	-10,351	25,516
Option 3 - 35 Days			
Shuttle	39,135	10,084	29,051
Park & Ride	-25,526	-19,374	-6,153
Total	13,609	-9,290	22,899

Notes:

The above figures are based on 2014/15 actuals pro-rated to the number of days the service would be delivered under the 3 options identified for 2015/16.

Income figures are adjusted to apply an increase of 60% to the shuttle service and 50% to the park and ride service, which relate directly to the increases proposed.

From these figures, with an increase in charges applied, the total deficit ranges from \$12,443 for Option 1 to \$15,164 for Option 2. This compares with the 2014/15 total deficit of \$44,665 and the TCDC subsidy of \$39,374.

Discussions with the Hot Water Beach and Hahei Ratepayers Groups were in agreement with the proposed increase to \$5 per adult fare.

The 2015/16 Annual Plan includes a budget of \$32,000 for the bus subsidy.

It is proposed that the fares be applied at the level outlined under section 5 above.

Conclusion

The discussion above proposes approval of a number of options in relation to the two bus services for the 2015/16 summer season. These are designed to provide the most efficient service to customers and assist in the relief of traffic congestion on the Ferry Landing, Cooks Beach, Hahei and Hot Water Beach areas, as well as reduce the cost to the Council. The proposals are set out in each section of this report and summarised in the suggested resolutions below.

5 Suggested Resolution(s)

That the **Mercury Bay Community Board:**

1. Receives the 'Park and Ride and Shuttle Bus Service 2015/16' report, dated 29 September 2015.
2. Approves the following arrangements for the delivery of the Ferry Landing to Hot Water Beach Shuttle Bus and Hahei Park and Ride services for the 2015/16 summer period.
 - a) That the services be provided for a 39 day period from 27 December to 1 February plus Waitangi weekend.
 - b) That no change be made to the hours of operation for the Park and ride and Shuttle Bus services for the 2015/16 summer with the hours for both to be from 10:00am to 6:00pm each day.
 - c) That the frequency be amended to 40 minute intervals for the Shuttle bus service and remain as a continuous service for the Park Ride.
 - d) That the bus stops remain the same as for 2014/15 with the exception that an additional bus stop be approved for the Cooks Beach central beach area.
 - e) That the fares for 2015/16 be:

Hahei Park and Ride return fare only:		
• Adults	\$5	
• Children	\$3	
• Family	\$10	
Shuttle Bus:		
	One Way	Return
• Adult	\$5	\$10
• Child	\$3	\$6
• Family	\$10	\$20
3. That the Area Manager be authorised to take all actions necessary to implement the services for the 2015/16 summer.
4. That a report be prepared for consideration at the November meeting of the Community Board on the long term future provision of bus services.

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A *2014/15 expenditure and income and projections for 2015/16 for Options 1, 2 and 3 incorporating fare increases.*

Attachment A
Attachment A - Budget projections