Minutes for:
Cambridge Connections Community Reference Group

Time:	5:15 – 6:45 pm
Date:	5 May 2026
Venue:	Kaipaki Room, Waipā District Council, Cambridge Office, 23 Wilson Street Cambridge, and via Teams.
In attendance:	Katie Mayes, Peter Carr (Co-Chair), Phil Mackay (Co-Chair), Kelly Bouzaid, Ian Wilson, David Cooney, Sharon Cresswell, Andrew Myers, Kellie Pearson, Peter Pickett, Poto Davies, Graham Scott Guests: Cllr Mike Montgomerie (Chair of the Governance Group), Charlotte Fitzpatrick (Chair of the Cambridge Community Board)
In support:	Rachel Algar, Bryan Hudson, Erik Van Der Wel, Marie Garland, Abby Reddy (minutes)
Guest presenter:	Katherine Simpson (Waikato Regional Council)
Apologies:	Alan Garvin, Ngawai Hamblin

1. Welcome and housekeeping

Poto Davies opened the meeting with a karakia.

Katie Mayes outlined the purpose of the workshop: to gather Community Reference Group feedback to support development of transport options for Cambridge Connections (Stage 2.2), ahead of options being taken to Council's Strategic Planning & Policy Committee on 3 June 2026.

Both presenters for the following workshops spoke to materials previously shared with CRG members.

2. Workshop: Public Transport

Presenter: Katherine Simpson (Waikato Regional Council).

Katherine provided an overview of Waikato Regional Council's role as the public transport authority, current Cambridge services (including the Cambridge–Hamilton service), and the Cambridge Local Service Study underway (10-year horizon) assessing options to improve local public transport service provision within Cambridge. Updated patronage context was discussed, including weekday usage increasing to approximately 650 passengers/day in February and approximately 732 passengers/day in March (noting March is typically busy).

Discussion: questions, comments and points raised

- **Local vs regional focus:** Members emphasised the need to clearly separate (but link) objectives for regional commuter travel (Cambridge–Hamilton) and local in-town access (within Cambridge), noting local movement is a key Cambridge Connections focus.
- **Patronage and demand:** Questions were raised about how patronage figures are calculated and what time periods they represent. Members queried whether low reported internal Cambridge trips reflects true demand, given limited local route coverage and convenience factors.
- **Capacity and user experience:** Members discussed peak bus fullness and how this affects service planning, as well as observations that some services appear busier than previously.
- **Awareness and accessibility:** Members asked what work is underway to improve awareness and uptake for Gold card users, older residents, and retirement village residents, and how service information can be made easier to understand and use.
- **Park and ride:** Members asked about the feasibility of park and ride in Cambridge and the respective roles of agencies; it was noted that infrastructure delivery typically sits with district councils while WRC manages service operations.
- **Funding constraints and timing:** Members discussed funding pathways through the NLTP cycle and the importance of aligning timing with Cambridge Connections outcomes.
- **Connectivity beyond Hamilton:** Interest was reiterated in connections such as Cambridge–Te Awamutu, noting this has been a recurring request and subject to funding prioritisation.
- **Governance process and ability to influence:** Members asked when the next study report is expected and how approvals work. Discussion noted unhappiness that a preferred route seemed to be being selected by WRC without reference to community feedback, and the importance of transparency so conceptual material is not perceived as pre-decided routing.

Katherine responded to questions by outlining how patronage is measured and current trends, the respective roles of Waikato Regional Council and councils (including for park and ride), and the timing and approval pathway for service changes through the NLTP cycle. Some questions requiring further detail will be collated and responded to separately (refer Actions and next steps).

3. Workshop: Walking, Cycling & Micromobility (map exercise)

Presenter: Erik Van Der Wel (Waipā District Council).

The session included a brief overview of the network approach for walking and cycling improvements and the importance of connected routes, followed by a map-based brainstorming exercise using printed maps and sticky notes in two groups.

- **Routes and destinations:** Strong interest in improving safe connections to schools and key destinations, and addressing gaps in the network, including in Leamington / south-side areas.

- **River crossings and approaches:** Members highlighted the importance of safe and practical walking/cycling connections across bridge approaches and around constrained sections.
- **Safety and design:** Discussion covered when shared paths may be sufficient versus when separated facilities are needed due to higher volumes and safety risk, noting different standards may be appropriate depending on corridor function.
- **Growth and future-proofing:** Members noted the importance of incorporating walking/cycling provision early in growth areas and new developments, and considering short-, medium- and long-term priorities.
- **Sharing outputs:** Members requested that map feedback be captured clearly and shared back in summary form.

See **Appendix 1** for a full summary of the workshop outcomes.

4. General business and project updates

- The Strategic Policy & Planning Committee received the assessed long list (55 ideas assessed; 16 ideas parked as out of scope/duplicative or not currently able to be pursued); assessment to be uploaded to the Cambridge Connections webpage.
- Additional reference material to be added online, including the Urban Mobility Business Case (2021) and a link to Waikato Regional Council's technical report; website navigation to be improved so key resources are easier to find.
- Upcoming Council and Community Board workshops are open to the public to attend or join online; next CRG workshop (next Wednesday) will focus on parking objectives and network options, informed by an Elected Member workshop on Friday.
- Waipā District Council organisational change underway; new structure commences 1 July. Katie Mayes to become Growth Strategy and Planning Director (one of five executive directors) and will continue to lead Cambridge Connections as executive lead.

5. Actions and next steps

- Project team to capture and summarise outputs from the printed-map exercise and share back with the CRG (refer Appendix 1).
- Project team to collate public transport questions raised during the session and provide responses where possible; where required, forward questions to Waikato Regional Council for response via the Cambridge Connections inbox.
- Project team to upload key reference material to the Cambridge Connections website, including supporting reports referenced during the workshop, and to improve website navigation for easier access to reference material.

Poto Davies closed the meeting with a karakia.

Appendix 1

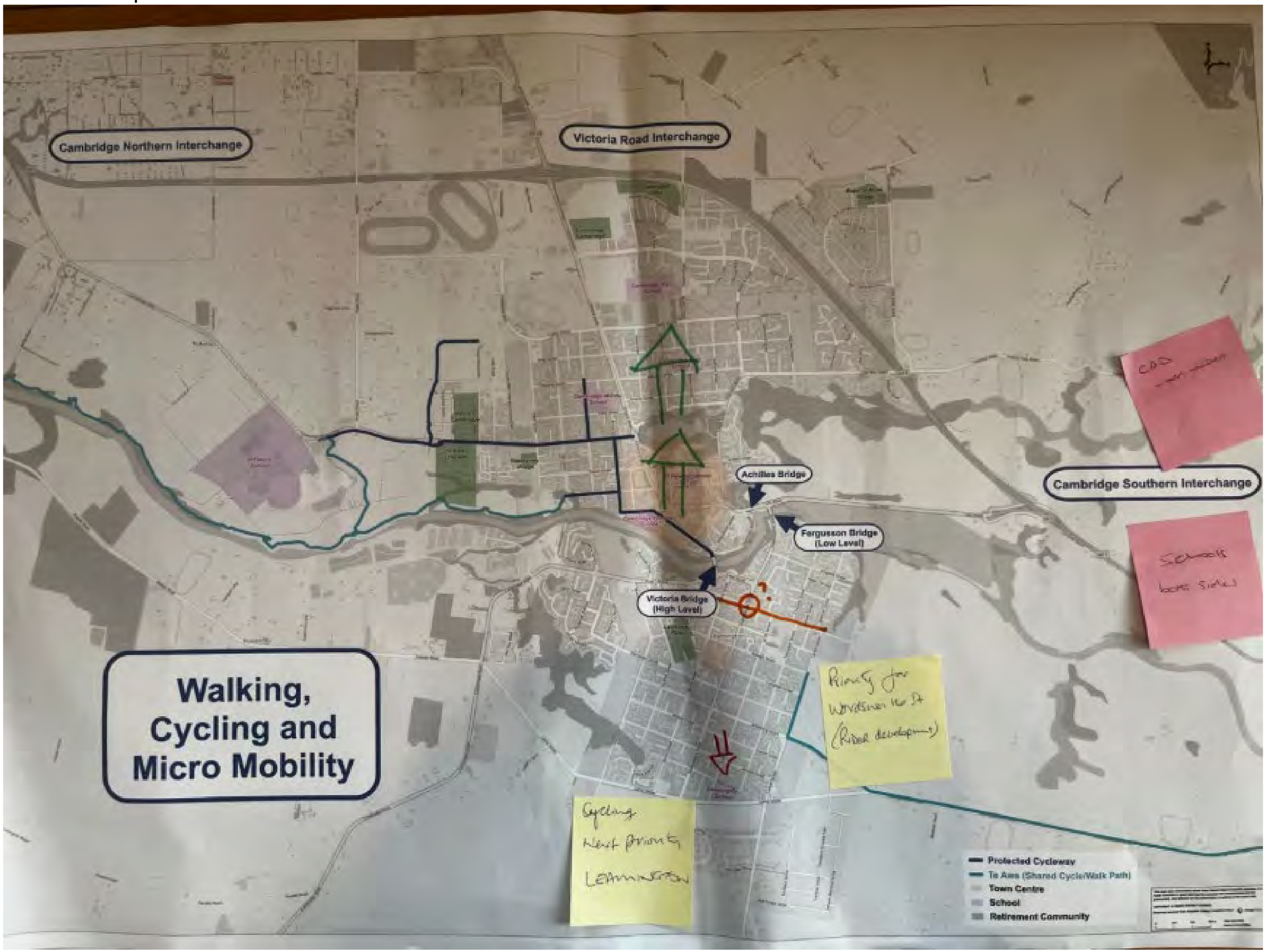
Workshop outcomes – Map Exercise

- Strong support for walking, cycling and micromobility as core components of the future transport system, particularly for everyday trips rather than recreational use only.
- Leamington identified as a priority area for future walking and cycling investment, with strong support for improved connections into the town centre.
- Improving safe access to schools was repeatedly identified as a key priority, especially during morning and afternoon peak times.
- River crossings and bridge approaches (including Achilles, Fergusson and Victoria Bridges) identified as key constraints and safety concern areas for active modes.
- Support for a connected, network-based approach to walking and cycling improvements rather than isolated projects.
- Discussion around when shared paths may be appropriate versus when separation of cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles is required due to volumes and safety risk.
- Strong focus on intersection safety, crossings and conflict points as critical barriers to active mode uptake.
- Recognition that achieving safer walking and cycling networks may require trade-offs, including changes to parking and road space, and a need for clear communication of costs and benefits.
- Importance placed on incorporating walking and cycling infrastructure early in growth areas and sequencing projects across short, medium and long-term horizons.

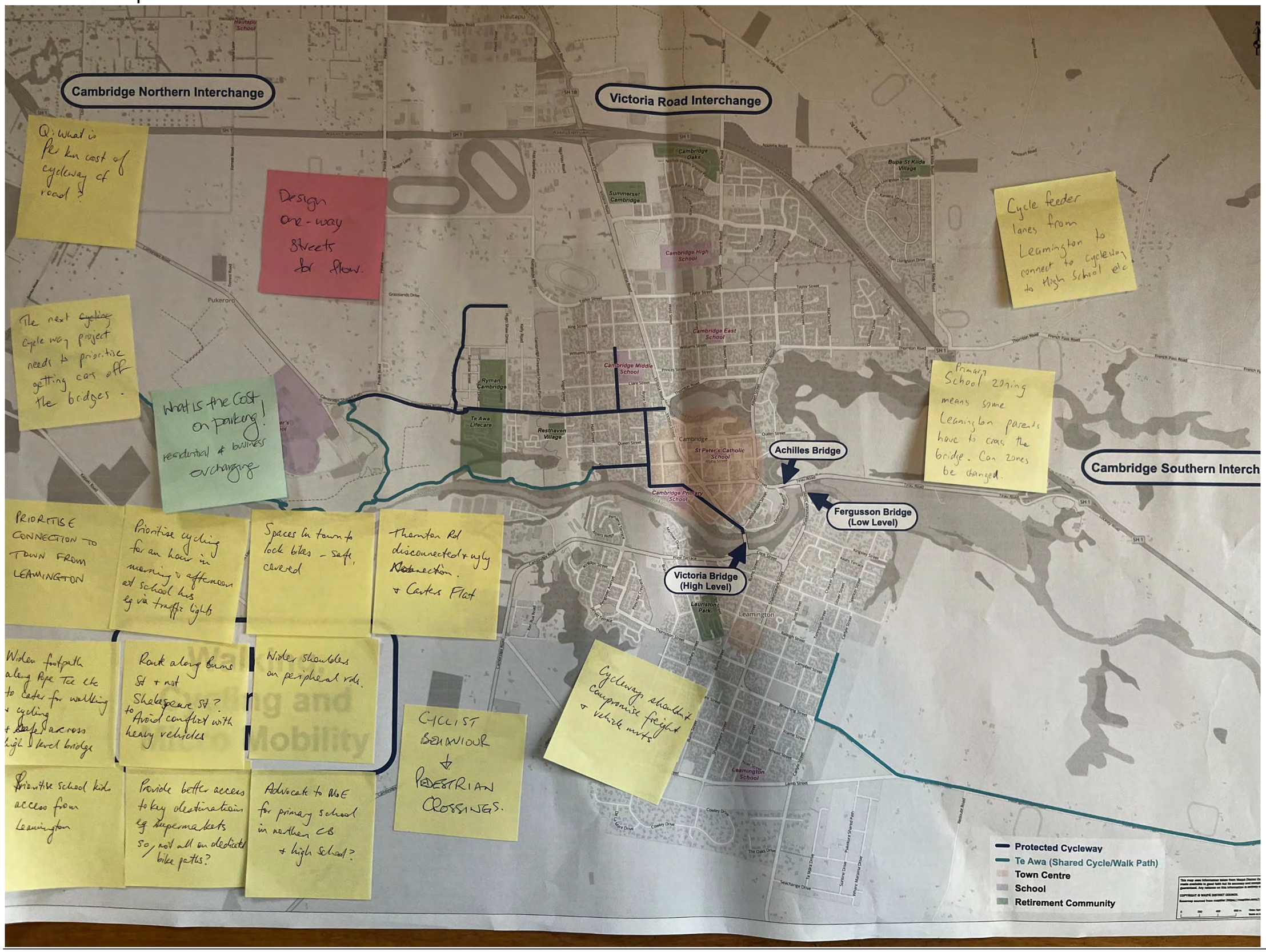
Workshop Map Outputs

The following images capture feedback recorded during the Walking, Cycling and Micromobility workshop map exercise.

Break-Out Group 1



Break-Out Group 2



Agenda: Cambridge Connections Community Reference Group

Time:	5.15pm-6.45 pm
Date:	Tuesday, 5 May 2026
Venue:	Kaipaki Room, Waipā District Council, Cambridge Office, 23 Wilson Street Cambridge, and via Teams.
Invited:	Katie Mayes, Peter Carr (Co-Chair), Phil Mackay (Co-Chair), Kelly Bouzaid, Ian Wilson, Ngawai Hamblin, David Cooney, Sharon Cresswell, Alan Garvin, Andrew Myers, Kellie Pearson, Peter Pickett, Poto Davies, Graham Scott
Supporting:	Rachel Algar, Bryan Hudson, Erik Van Der Wel, Abby Reddy, (minutes) Waikato Regional Council – Katherine Simpson

Purpose: To workshop public transport and walking, cycling & micromobility options for the transport options to be considered for approval by the Strategic Planning and Policy Committee on 3 June.

Agenda Item	Timing
Karakia timatanga	
1. Welcome and housekeeping	5 min
2. Workshop: Public Transport	35 min
3. Workshop: Walking, Cycling & Micromobility Options	45 min
4. General Business and Next Steps • Next CRG and other meetings – refer below	5 min
Karakia whakamutunga	

Upcoming workshops and meetings

We have a series of workshops with Elected Members, the Cambridge Community Board and the Community Reference Group to help develop the transport options, as set out in the table overleaf (some dates TBC). We will work in parallel with mana whenua partners.

The community will be kept informed during this stage, with supporting data and other information being shared on the project website as it becomes available.

Date	Meeting	Purpose
4 May	SP&P meeting	Seek endorsement of assessed long list of transport ideas
5 May	Elected Member workshop	Public transport & walking, cycling & micromobility workshop
5 May	CRG	Public transport & walking, cycling & micromobility workshop
13 May	Community Reference Group	Parking and network options workshop
TBC	Elected Member workshop	Parking and network options considered
19 May?	Project Governance Group meeting	Review transport options and approach for SP&P meeting
19 May	Cambridge Community Board workshop	Options considered re parking, networks, public transport, and walking, cycling & micromobility
20 May	CRG	Summary, Next steps
3 June	SP&P meeting	Seek approval of transport options
14 June	Risk and Assurance meeting	Quarterly risk update

To:	Cambridge Connections Community Reference Group		
From:	Katie Mayes, Executive Director		
Date:	5 May 2026	**File Ref:**	11673611
Subject:	Cambridge Connections Workshop – Public Transport, and Walking, Cycling & Micromobility Options		

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide explanatory information to support the workshop on 5 May.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Public Transport

The workshop will inform the CRG on how public transport services are delivered in Cambridge and discuss the short-listed options for public transport services within Cambridge. The options have been developed through the Cambridge Local Public Transport Service project (refer Appendix 1).

Remember you can watch the 5ish minute video we made about public transport for Cambridge Connections here - Community Ideas Forum | Cambridge Connections – Moving forward together | Let's Talk Waipā.

Cambridge Local Public Transport Service project

The project has been commissioned by Waikato Regional Council (WRC), in partnership with Waipā District Council (WDC), to assess potential improvements to public transport services within Cambridge over a 10-year planning horizon (2027–2037). The study responds to the current absence of a dedicated local service in Cambridge and builds on wider transport planning initiatives, including Cambridge Connections, PT Pathways and the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP). The work also acknowledges sustained population growth in Cambridge, increasing travel demand, and strong recent patronage growth on the existing Cambridge–Hamilton bus service.

The work has been structured into two technical reports:

- Technical Report 1 has been completed and finalised. It established the evidence base for the project, reviewed a wide range of service models, and assessed a long list of potential options. As a result of that assessment, four service concepts were shortlisted for more detailed investigation – to be discussed at the workshop.

- Technical Report 2, builds on this work by undertaking more detailed assessment of the short-listed options, including high-level operational considerations, costs, and implementation pathways. A draft has been provided to WRC and WDC. Council staff from both organisations are currently reviewing the draft and preparing feedback for the consultant to consider prior to issuing the final report.

The work acknowledges that a staged approach may be appropriate, with a short-term option capable of evolving into a medium- or long-term solution as Cambridge continues to grow. The final recommendations from this work will inform future programme planning and integration with the wider transport network.

2.2 Walking, Cycling and Micromobility

The workshop will consider network options for walking, cycling and other micromobility. Options have been drawn from the 2021 Urban Mobility Business Case (refer Appendices 2 and 3).

Urban Mobility Business Case

A business case was developed and approved by Council in 2021 that outlines how Council will carry out an improved walking, cycling, scootering mobility network connectivity in Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Kihikihi. This business case remains very relevant and will form the evidential basis of the workshop.

The business case was developed with Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency and through workshops with elected members and other representatives.

The business case identifies local streets in the three towns that would be earmarked for a network that will link with retirement villages and other main destinations that people want to go to, including shopping centres. As well as identifying infrastructure, the business case looks at the facilities people need at each end, improving bike skills training and education, bike access schemes and so on.

Micromobility definition (Wikipedia)

Micromobility is the use of small, lightweight vehicles designed for short-distance travel in urban areas and operated by their users. Micromobility encompasses a wide range of transport options, including bicycles, velomobiles, e-bikes, cargo bikes, electric scooters, electric skateboards, wheelchairs, shared bicycle fleets, and electric pedal-assisted bicycles.

Micromobility uses wheeled vehicles that are low-speed, operated by a single person, and meant for travel over a short distance. Micromobility can use a combination of any human-powered, combustion and electric-based propulsion.

2.3 Drivers of Change

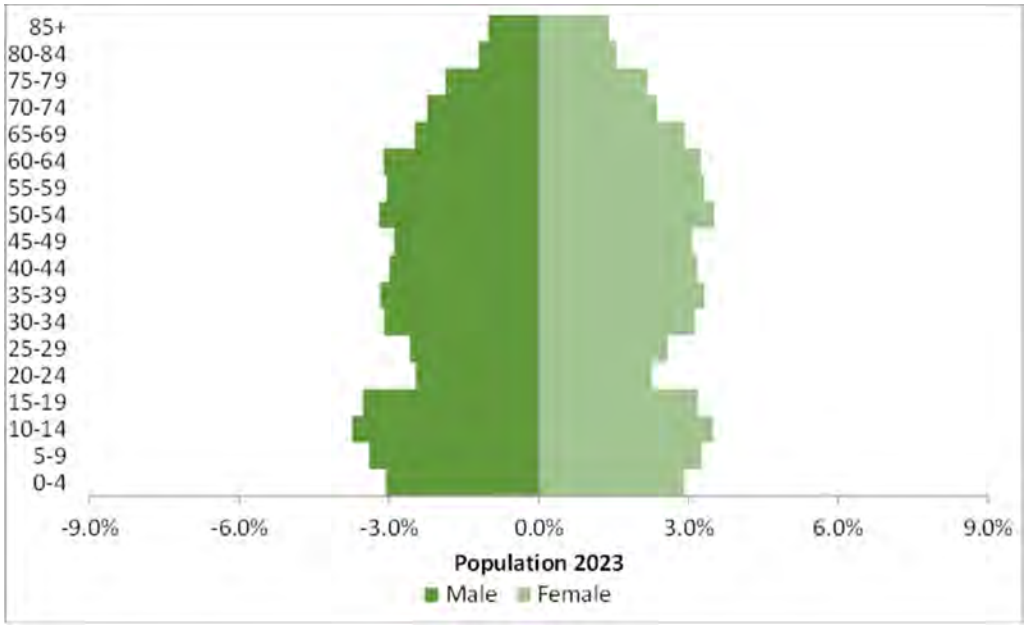
NZTA has identified six external drivers that will shape and change the transport system over the next 30 years:

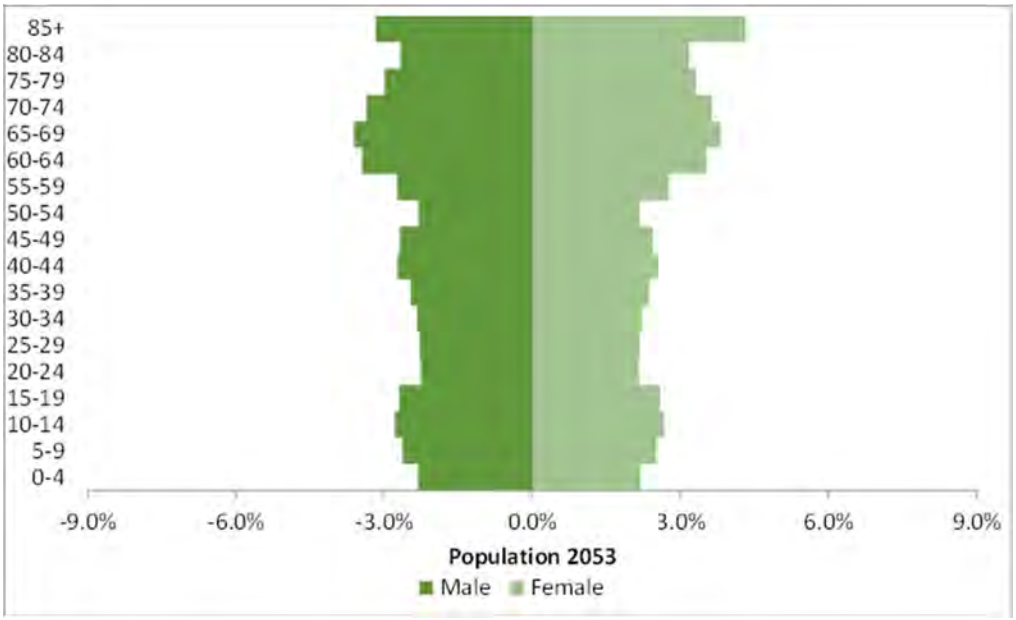
- demographic change – changes to the structure and groups in a population
- changing economic structure
- climate change
- technology and data
- funding challenges
- changing travel patterns.

We need to make sure we understand the likely changes and their implications as we plan for the next 30 years in Cambridge.

Information about how and where Cambridge has grown and is projected to grow will be presented at a Council workshop on 13 May. We will share this material with you once it is available.

Projected changes in the age structure in Cambridge and resulting implications will be particularly relevant to consider as part of Cambridge Connections. An aging population will reduce the amount of vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT), and change modes of travel, origins and destinations, and so on.





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Future Transport

The way we move is also expected to change dramatically in the next 30 years. People will be able to choose transport services based more on their needs, abilities, and lifestyle. You can read more about what NZTA thinks that might mean for Cambridge in Appendix 4 (note this PowerPoint is already available on the Cambridge Connections website).

For New Zealand as a whole, here is what NZTA says will happen to the way we move[1]:

"In towns and cities, people will travel by a range of active and shared ways that include:

- *micromobility, such as bikes and scooters*
- *e-mobility, like e-bikes and other electric options*
- *public transport, such as buses and trains*
- *shared-mobility options, such as car share.*

Rural New Zealand will also open up to more active and shared modes of moving.

Our light vehicle fleet will be smaller and safer, with lower emissions. Heavy vehicles, including public transport vehicles, will have lower emissions.

[1] What land transport could be like in 30 years | NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

People of all ages and abilities will have transport options that are more affordable and accessible. We'll focus on making sure rural communities and lower-income households can access transport options that meet their needs.

Many parts of the transport system will still be important for moving and connecting people, communities and freight. These include roads, rail, cycleways, footpaths, ports, hubs, and airports. But they'll be used and managed more efficiently.

Coastal and rail shipping will continue to play an important role in moving goods, with volumes growing to meet demand (depending on the commodity). Freight ports and hubs will allow swift transfer and connection between transport modes.

Short-haul air travel, including drones, may be used to move high-value, time-critical goods. These movements may be overseen by freight hubs using digital connectivity, embedded sensors, and artificial intelligence."

2.4 Overall Approach for the Transport Plan

Cambridge Connections is aligned with the optimisation-first approach of the NZTA intervention hierarchy, ensuring the district makes the best use of existing assets and network performance, before investing in new infrastructure.

The Cambridge Connections Transport Plan will therefore be based around the following overarching themes:

- **Optimise what we already have**
  Make the most of existing transport networks and services through better management, strong enforcement, demand management, network optimisation, and supporting mode shift.

- **Consider new infrastructure and services where needed**
  Only after optimisation measures have been fully explored, assess whether additional infrastructure or service improvements are required.

- **Respond to and influence wider system changes and external decisions**
  Recognise, respond to, and influence projects and network and service decisions led by others, e.g., NZTA and WRC, to ensure local solutions are integrated with, and supported by, the performance of the sub-regional transport system.

3. ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION

No.	Title
1	Public transport options (Waikato Regional Council) (ECM 11673961)
2	Walking, cycling & micromobility map (ECM 11671617)
3	Walking, cycling & micromobility PowerPoint (ECM 11670016)
4	Future transport (NZTA) (ECM 11638484)
5	PT Pathways brochure (ECM 11673963)

Katie Mayes
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

APPENDIX 1

Public transport options (Waikato Regional Council) (ECM 11673961)

MOTT MACDONALD

Cambridge Local Service Assessment

Planning for the future of public transport in Cambridge

February 2026

Document Set ID: 11673961
Version: 1, Version Date: 28/04/2026

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Version: 1, Version Date: 28/04/2026

Mott MacDonald
Level 1, 30 Daldy Street
Wynyard Quarter
Auckland
1010
PO Box 91568
Victoria St West 1142
New Zealand

T +64 (0)9 375 2400
mottmac.com

Cambridge Local Service Assessment

Planning for the future of public transport in Cambridge

February 2026

Mott MacDonald New Zealand Limited
Registered in New Zealand no. 3338812

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Document Set ID: 11673961
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A	09/12/2025	AO/LE	LDG	MB	First draft for client review
B	27/02/2026	AO/LE	LDG	MB	Final report incorporating client review comments

Document reference: 705101040-001 | 1 | B

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Executive summary

Cambridge, in Waipā District, is currently served by a single public bus route that connects it to Hamilton City. This service, route 20, averages around 500 boardings per weekday. Most of these trips are between Cambridge and Hamilton, though some are internal within Cambridge.

Strong residential growth in Cambridge, with up to 9,000 additional residents expected by 2037, will create increased demand for transport. Waikato Regional Council and Waipā District Council are therefore considering whether a local public transport service should be introduced within Cambridge. Such a service would make public transport accessible to more residents.

This is the first of two Technical Reports considering options for a Cambridge local public transport service. A long-list of eight options has been developed and based on a multi-criteria assessment four potential short-list options have been identified.

The long-list options have been informed by case studies of different service models, from New Zealand and North America, which could be relevant to Cambridge. Four service models were considered, which include:

- **Fixed-route bus services**, like those already operating in Cambridge. Similar-sized New Zealand towns were assessed to benchmark Cambridge's existing performance and show the level of boardings additional services might achieve.
- **On-demand services,** which offer more flexibility than traditional bus routes. Case studies from New Zealand provide learnings to consider for any Cambridge service.
- **Mixed service** concepts, based on North American examples, show how features of on-demand service can be blended with or complement traditional bus services.
- **Subsidised services**, such as taxis or Ubers, with fares off-set by the Regional Council, are another concept examined. A case study from Canada shows this is feasible and could be applied in Cambridge, but comparison to local on-demand services demonstrates no particular advantage of this concept.

Based on these service models, the eight conceptual options identified for Cambridge include:

- **Three different approaches to fixed route services**, which include different ways in which the existing regional service to Hamilton could be amended or enhanced.
- **Two options for on-demand services**, contrasting the possibility of point-to-point services with a potentially more efficient approach of enabling trips to set destinations.
- **Two hybrid options**, based on the service models, which seek to combine the efficiency of fixed-route services with the potential of on-demand to maximise coverage.
- **One subsidised option**, which poses risks including that it may not be considered as 'public transport' and therefore could be ineligible for funding from central government.

Four options have been shortlised, based on a high-level assessment of factors like patronage potential, value for money, policy alignment, and customer experience. The short-list includes:

- **A complementary local bus service** supporting the current regional route.
- **A new branch of the regional service** to expand coverage to the north of Cambridge.
- **Set-destination on-demand service**, to maximise both usage and coverage.
- **Mixed service** a combination of fixed routes at peak times with on-demand service at other times, balancing capacity and coverage.

These four options will be developed further in Technical Report 2, including detailed development of the recommended option.

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1 Introduction

Waikato Regional Council (WRC) has commissioned Mott MacDonald to assess potential options for public transport improvements within Cambridge, in the Waipā District. Cambridge is experiencing significant population growth, and WRC is working with the Waipā District Council (WDC) to consider how best to respond to this growth with improved transport connections.

Mott MacDonald's scope includes possible public transport improvements within Cambridge (including potential changes to the existing service), covering the 2027 to 2037 period.

This is the first of two Technical Reports that considers improvements to local public transport within the town. The work is intended to inform future funding applications to the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and to contribute to WDC's Cambridge Connections transport planning work.

This report is broken down into 7 further sections:

- **Section 2** sets out Cambridge's growth plans.
- **Section 3** outlines the existing public transport services that operate within Cambridge.
- **Section 4** includes an assessment of potential public transport service models which might be applicable to Cambridge. This includes case studies from other towns in New Zealand and North America, which illustrate applications of the different service models.
- **Section 5** sets out a long-list of options for how the different service models could be conceptually applied to Cambridge. Eight options are proposed, and their different features are compared.
- **Section 6** includes an assessment of the eight long-list options against a set of assessment criteria, to enable them to be ranked.
- **Section 7** sets out the short-list of options that will be developed in more detail in the second phase of this work.
- **Section 8** covers the next steps of the work.

The short-list of options is further developed in the second Technical Report.

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2 Growth in Cambridge

This section discusses the population growth that is planned in Cambridge and provides and overview of how WDC is considering changes to the town's transport in response to the growth. Cambridge's growth is part of the reason for considering additional public transport services, and this section sets out the basis on which comparisons in section 4 are based.

2.1 Growth predictions

Over the past decade, Cambridge has experienced considerable population growth, a trend that is expected to continue over the next decade. The town's current population is approximately 22,700 residents.[1]

Growth areas identified and zoned by WDC are shown, outlined yellow and blue, in Figure 2-1 on the following page. The blue growth cells are expected to be developed by the mid-2030s, while the yellow growth cells will be developed afterwards.

WDC's planning provides an estimated capacity of each of the growth cells based on potential future household numbers. To support planning for a potential local public transport service, which would include these growth areas, this work has developed several projections of Cambridge's possible population in 2037.

The projected population for Cambridge in 2037 is likely to be within a range of figures, based on variations of factors such as average household size, the number of predicted new dwellings realised, and the overall growth rate of the area. The three estimates of the range are:

- **28,000** residents (lower range)
- **31,000** residents (medium range)
- **33,000** residents (upper range) [2]

The medium range represents approximately 700 new residents per year between now and 2037, which is roughly in-line with the growth Cambridge has experienced since the 2013 census when the town's population was 16,000 people.

University of Waikato estimates from late 2025 provided by WDC indicate that Cambridge is likely to reach just over 30,000 residents by 2037, with 31,000 residents by 2039. These figures are based on a 'high' growth scenario, which councils are required by the Government to use.

Together, these estimates suggest it is likely Cambridge will have a population of between 30,000 and 31,000 residents by 2037.

These projections enable both a comparison to other towns of a similar size, for the purpose of the case studies discussed in section 4, and estimation of potential patronage for the future service the next phase of this work, Technical Report 2.

Slightly more growth is expected on the northern (Cambridge) side of the river compared to the southern (Leamington) side.

[1] Based on Stats NZ 2025 population estimates.

[2] These ranges were identified as appropriate in correspondence with WDC staff.

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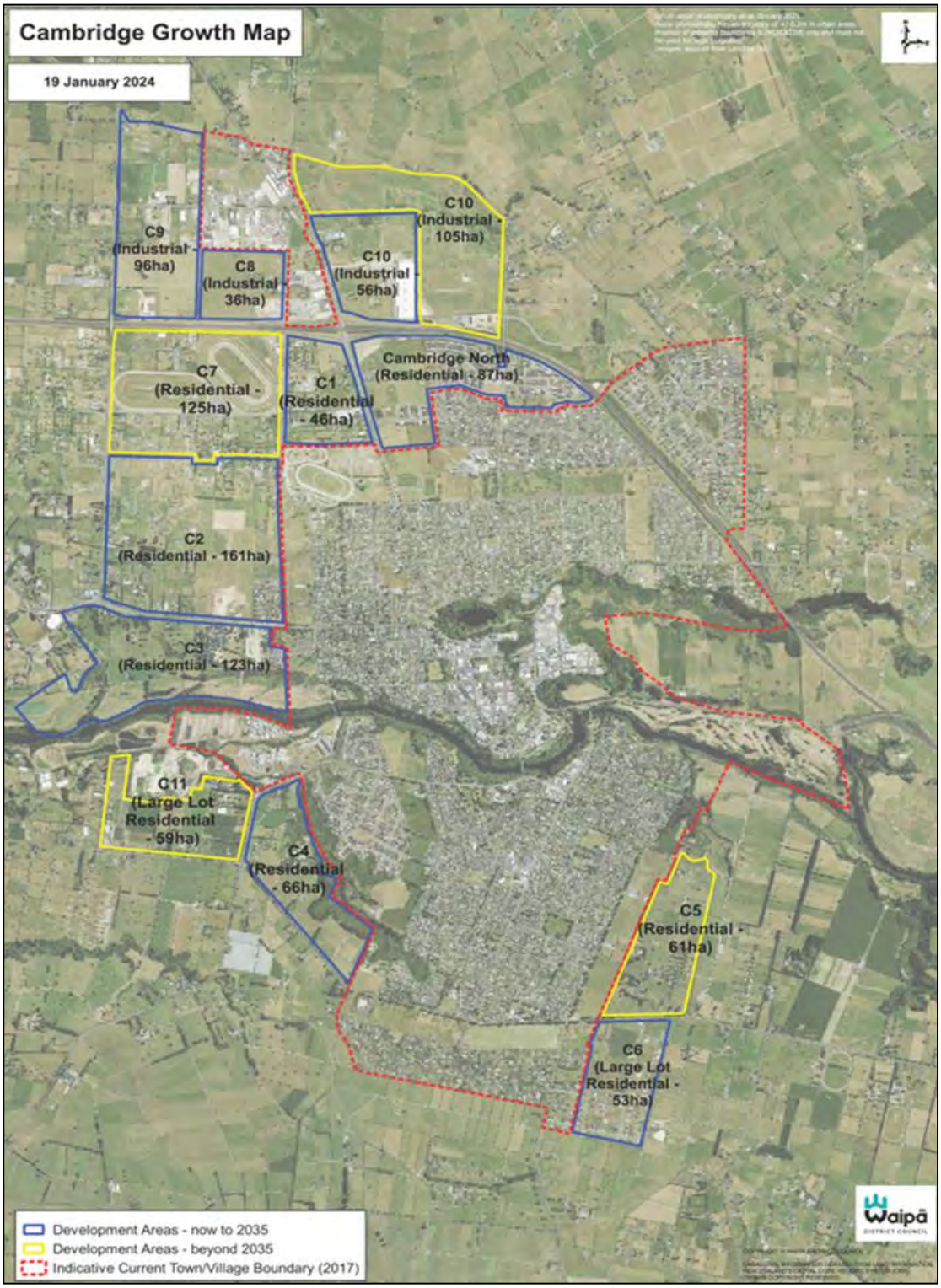
Figure 2-1: Map of development areas in Cambridge



Source: Waipā District Plan, Appendix S1

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2.2 Growth and transport demand

The Cambridge Connections programme is WDC's transport response to the growth Cambridge is experiencing. It is considering ways to improve transport within the town, including the potential introduction of additional public transport services.

Initial public engagement on Cambridge Connections shows that roughly 48% of current residents believe that public transport improvements would benefit the town. [3] This shows there is some support for extra services.

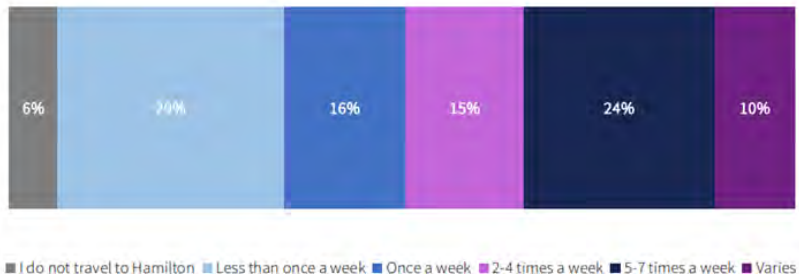
It is important to note, however, that this support for better public transport is not the same as 48% of respondents saying they would personally use such a service. The engagement also showed support for general traffic improvements. Respondents may actually wish to continue driving and consider it would be helpful for them to drive if other people used public transport.

The market for public transport in Cambridge could be expected to fall into three key categories:

- **Commuters** – those travelling for work. Commuters are a large part of the existing public transport market within Cambridge (primarily for trips to Hamilton). This is discussed in section 3.2. Commuting by public transport is generally seen as an attractive option when either the trip is faster than by car (or other modes), or when the cost of the service is lower than the price of parking.
  The cost and availability of parking is a key consideration for trips to Hamilton (particularly the City Centre) but is not currently an issue in Cambridge's town centre (which has a large amount of free all-day parking). As Cambridge grows, restrictions on parking may become more common which could encourage more use of public transport for internal trips.
- **Students** – those travelling for study, either at a school, the University of Waikato, Wintec or another tertiary institute. Students are less likely to either be able to drive (for school students) or own a car (for tertiary students), making their demand for public transport greater. Students may also commute to jobs in Hamilton, particularly on weekends or days they do not have classes.
- **Elderly** – older residents, particularly those eligible for free public transport (by way of the GoldCard). Elderly residents may not want or be able to drive, and/or may prefer to make use of free public transport (when eligible). Some existing retirement communities within Cambridge offer shuttle services for residents, but these may not be as regular as public transport would be.

Many existing Cambridge residents travel regularly to Hamilton, as shown in Figure 2-2 . Public transport will continue to offer an attractive option to existing and new residents for this trip as Cambridge grows, and this is a key market for service improvements to consider.

Figure 2-2: Frequency of travel to Hamilton



Source: Waipā District Travel Habits Survey, 2018

[3] Cambridge Connections Stage 1 feedback

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3 Existing service

This section includes an overview of the existing public transport service that exists within Cambridge, the patronage on the service, key boarding and alighting locations, and future service planning for the town.

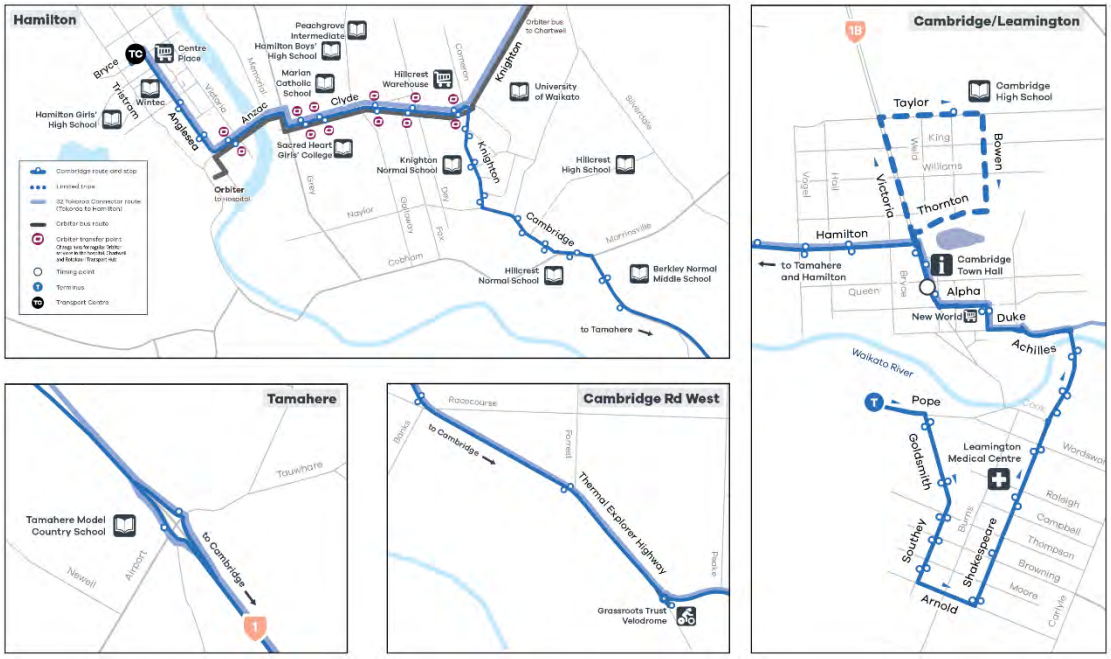
3.1 Overview

Currently, public transport service in Cambridge is limited to route 20, which is operated by Tranzit on behalf of WRC. Route 20 connects Leamington and Cambridge to Hamilton, with a trip every 45 minutes to an hour on weekdays and one trip per hour on weekends.

Major stops in Cambridge include Leamington Medical Centre and the Cambridge Town Hall. A diversion also services Cambridge High School at school times. These are shown in Figure 3-1.

In Hamilton, key destinations include Clyde St near Knighton Rd (for the University of Waikato), and Hamilton Transport Centre, which serves the City Centre and provides further connections across the Hamilton area and to surrounding towns.

Figure 3-1: Route map for route 20



Source: Cambridge bus timetable

In addition to route 20, 10 different school bus services are operated on behalf of the Ministry of Education. These delivery students to schools across Cambridge and Leamington from rural settlements around Cambridge. Consideration of school bus services is not part of the scope of this work.

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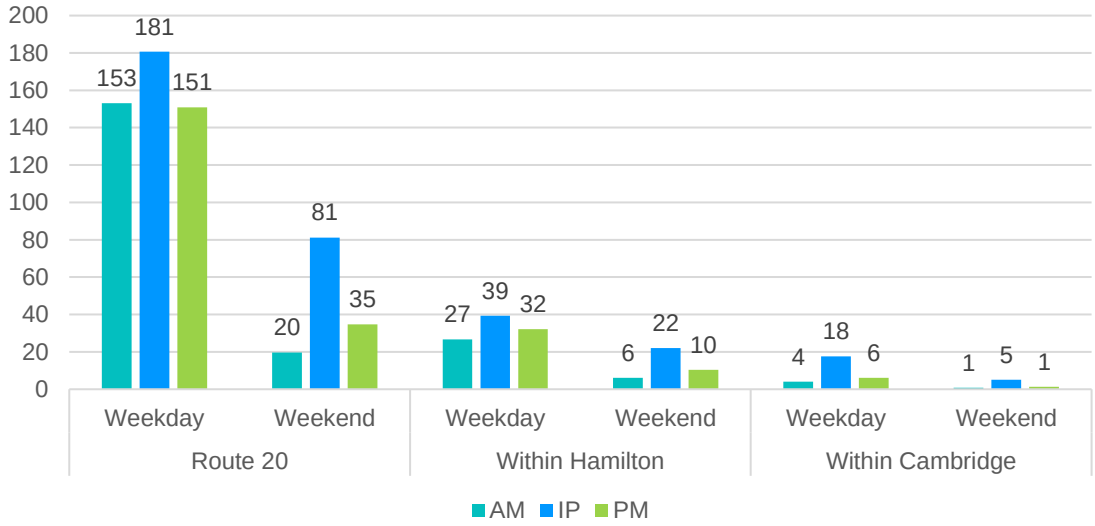
3.2 Patronage

On average, route 20 sees around 500 passengers per day on weekdays and 150 passengers per day on weekends.

On weekdays, most of those trips are between Cambridge and Hamilton (around 370), with some trips happening within Hamilton (around 100) and a much smaller number within Cambridge (around 30).

The split of boardings is shown in Figure 3-2 below. Note that the values shown do not sum to the daily totals as late evening hours are not included.

Figure 3-2: Average daily boardings on Route 20



Source: Mott MacDonald, adapted from WRC data

Compared to other New Zealand towns of Cambridge's size, route 20's average daily boardings are quite high . The fact that the route also serves passengers within Hamilton contributes to this higher patronage. This comparison is discussed in more detail in section 4.1. Overall, this level of patronage suggests that route 20 is performing its existing functions well.

Patronage has grown strongly over the past few years (following the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced public transport usage). Some services now operate as double-deck buses, to meet high peak-time demand.

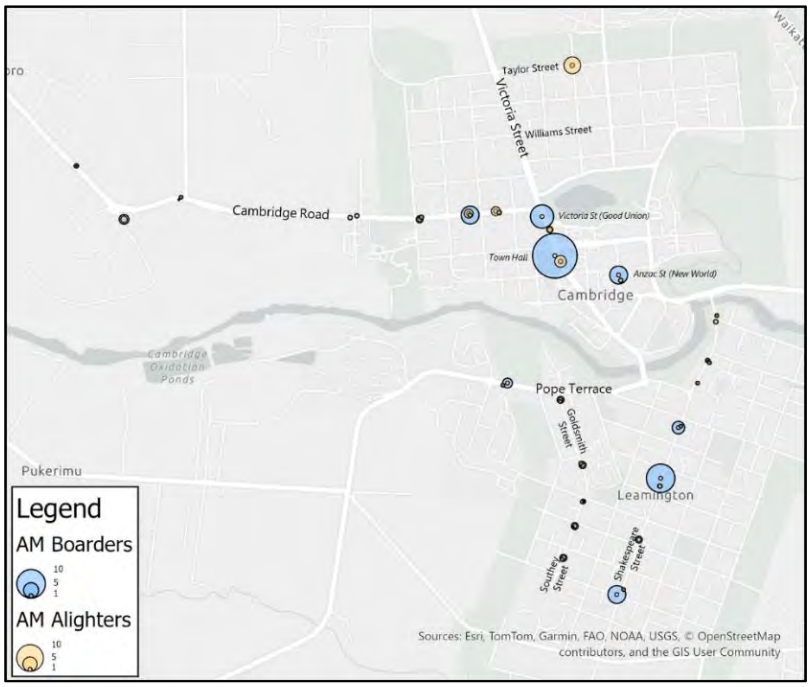
3.3 Boarding and alighting locations in Cambridge

As shown in Figure 3-2, only 5.9% of trips on Route 20 are internal trips within Cambridge, compared to 67.2% between Cambridge and Hamilton. The remaining trips are either internal within Hamilton or to/from Tamahere The majority of boardings and alightings occur on Victoria Street in the town centre. The Town Hall stop records the highest number of boardings during the morning and interpeak periods, whereas the greatest number of evening alightings is observed at the stop immediately north of the Town Hall (outside the Good Union). Notably, there is no formal bus stop at this location on the southbound route; it is possible that some passengers are tagging off early for the Town Hall stop, resulting in the system attributing these alightings to the preceding stop.

The Leamington shopping centre is another key destination, with slightly more boardings in the morning peak than alightings in the evening, which may reflect students travelling to the high school and/or people that board in Leamington in the morning and get off in the town centre in the evening (to access services there).

The locations of boarders and alighters in the morning (6:00 to 10:00), interpeak (10:00 to 16:00) and evening (16:00 to 19:00) peaks are shown in Figure 3-4, and Figure 3-5 respectively. These represent the average daily number of boardings at each stop, for all trip purposes, based on data from 2023 to 2025. Trips within Cambridge only (i.e., not to Hamilton) are concentrated at the town centre, Leamington shops, and the high school.

Figure 3-3: Boarders and alighters in Cambridge in the morning peak



Source: Mott MacDonald, adapted from WRC data

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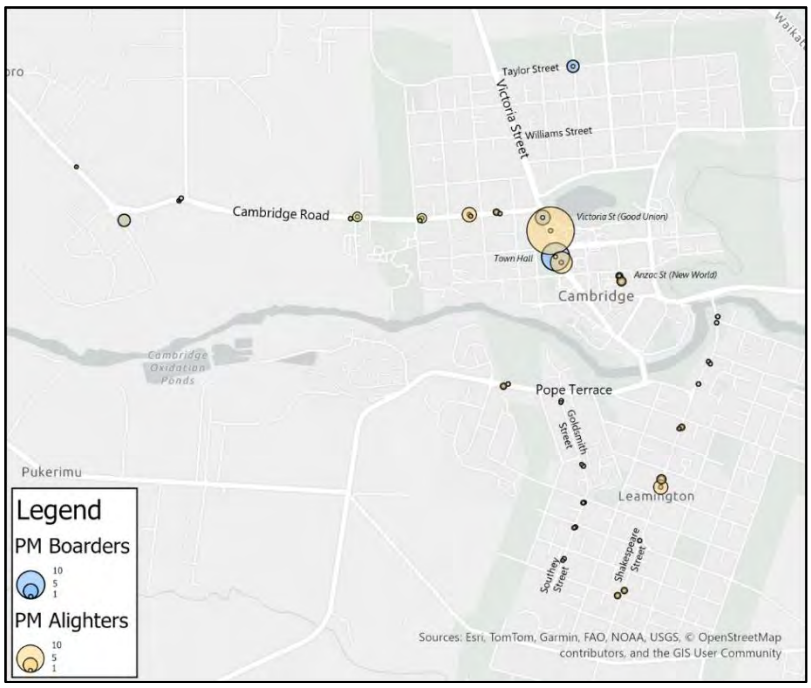
Figure 3-4: Boarders and alighters in Cambridge in the interpeak period

Source: Mott MacDonald, adapted from WRC data

Figure 3-5: Boarders and alighters in Cambridge in the evening peak



Source: Mott MacDonald, adapted from WRC data

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3.4 Future service plans

A range of statutory and strategic plans have been produced by and for WRC that include planned or potential improvements for public transport services to and within Cambridge. This sub-section includes an overview of three key plans or proposals. Other studies not discussed in detail have looked at possible changes or improvements to route 20 within Hamilton.

3.4.1 Regional Public Transport Plan

The Waikato Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) outlines policies and plans for services over the 2022 to 2032 period. It includes an action to "establish frequent transport links between Hamilton and the larger metro towns"[4] which include Cambridge. This is noted as an aspirational peak frequency of every 20 minutes, and an off-peak frequency of every 60 minutes. These peak frequencies would be an increase compared to today, and the RPTP notes they will be achieved over time. The plan also suggests that local services should operate within the larger 'metro towns' outside of Hamilton, which includes Cambridge.

Other than changes to route 20, the RPTP does not currently include any plans for additional services in Cambridge. This would need to be updated to include the recommended option from this work. The RPTP does note that local services may be introduced to regional towns over time, with the objective being to provide "transport options to enable access to essential services within regional townships".[5] Route 20 currently performs this local coverage role.

A potential future service between Cambridge and Te Awamutu is identified in the RPTP, although no timeframe for this services' introduction is noted.

3.4.2 Public Transport Pathways

The Hamilton Waikato Metro Spatial Plan Public Transport Pathways 2024 report (PT Pathways) looked at potential improvements to services across the wider Waikato Region. This included a review of service levels and routing.

For Cambridge (and Te Awamutu), the report proposed a change that would both service levels on route 20 and improving coverage within the town at the same time. This would involve adding an additional 'branch' to the service, to cover the northern part of Cambridge (while the existing branch would continue providing coverage to Leamington. The combined frequency of the branches (the service between Hamilton and Cambridge) would be higher than the existing route 20.

The concept of a regional branch service, like PT Pathways' proposal for Cambridge, has merit and is discussed in more detail in section 5.1.3.

3.4.3 Cambridge loop service

A 2020 study of public transport improvements for the wider Waipā District included a proposal for a local loop service that would operate in Cambridge, connecting the town centre, Cambridge north, and Leamington.

This service concept was referenced in a 2023 WDC Financial Case for Bus Transport Improvements, noting that the proposed route was indicative only.

The concept of a local service, discrete from the existing regional service (route 20) has merit, and is discussed in more detail in section 5.1.1.

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[4] Waikato RPTP, p 19.

[5] Waikato RPTP, p. 29.

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4 Service models

This section sets out case studies of potential public transport services models which could be applicable to Cambridge. The case studies are intended to illustrate the different ways in which the service models have been applied in other towns and locations. The possible ways these models could be applied to Cambridge are set out in section Long-list options5.

Where possible, the case studies are based on New Zealand towns of a similar size to Cambridge (accounting for Cambridge's likely population growth over the next 10 years). Where New Zealand examples could not be found, other English-speaking locations have been preferred (for ease of reference).

There are four potentially applicable service models that have been identified:

1. **Fixed route service** – 'traditional' bus services, like the existing route 20.
2. **On-demand service** – flexibly routed services than can be requested via an app.
3. **Hybrid service** – combinations of elements fixed route and on-demand services.
4. **Subsidised service** – private service providers, subsidised to reduce costs to users.

Within each service model, there can be different variations of service design. The case studies are not intended as an exhaustive list of examples. Rather, they serve as comparisons of how similar service models have been applied elsewhere, to inform the long-list of options developed for Cambridge. The examples can also be used to consider how a local service within Cambridge might perform.

Sub-sections 4.1 to 4.4 set out the four service models ,while sub-section 4.5 provides a comparison of key metrics used in the case studies.

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4.1 Fixed route service

Fixed route bus services are common throughout New Zealand. Cambridge's population, at around 22,000 people (in 2025) means that it has roughly 10 peer towns within New Zealand of a similar size (between 20,000 and 30,000 people). Not all of these towns have fixed-route bus services. A comparison of towns by population and service is shown in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Town population and service availability comparison

Town	Region	Population	Bus Services
Paraparaumu	Wellington	29,900	Yes
Blenheim	Marlborough	29,800	Yes
Timaru	Canterbury	29,300	On-Demand only[6]
Queenstown	Otago	29,000	Yes
Pukekohe	Auckland	28,800	Yes
Taupō	Waikato	27,000	Yes
Cambridge	Waikato	22,700	Yes (to Hamilton)
Masterton	Wellington	22,600	Yes
Ashburton	Canterbury	21,600	No
Levin	Manawatū-Whanganui	20,500	Yes (to Palmerston North)

Source: Stats NZ 2025 population estimates

Some of these towns have a relationship to a nearby urban centre similar to that Cambridge has with Hamilton. Towns like Paraparaumu and Pukekohe have connections to Wellington and Auckland, with local buses acting as feeder services to the train. Others, like Queenstown or Taupō, have a more self-contained network with no larger centre nearby.

The next largest town, Rolleston (at 34,000 people), is functionally part of the Christchurch urban area. The next smallest town, Richmond (at 19,900 people) is functionally part of the Nelson urban area. Both towns benefit from the bus services of those areas.

The performance of the bus services of these towns varies significantly. Factors like tourism and access to nearby urban centres appear to be part of this variation; Blenheim, despite being one of the larger towns, has much lower patronage (at around 47 per day on average[7]) than Cambridge, for example. Blenheim is much further from a larger urban area than Cambridge. Queenstown has significantly more boardings (an average of around 5,500 per day), given its high tourist numbers[8] and despite being far from a larger urban area.

Even some larger centres like Gisborne (population 38,000) have fewer passengers per day than Cambridge (Gisborne has an average of around 350 boardings per day). Population alone is not the key factor in public transport patronage.

Three centres within Cambridge's peer range are studied in more detail in the rest of this section. These centres are Masterton, Levin, and Pukekohe.

[6] Timaru's bus services were replaced by on-demand services in 2021.

[7] Marlborough Regional Public Transport Plan 2024-2034

[8] Otago Regional Council

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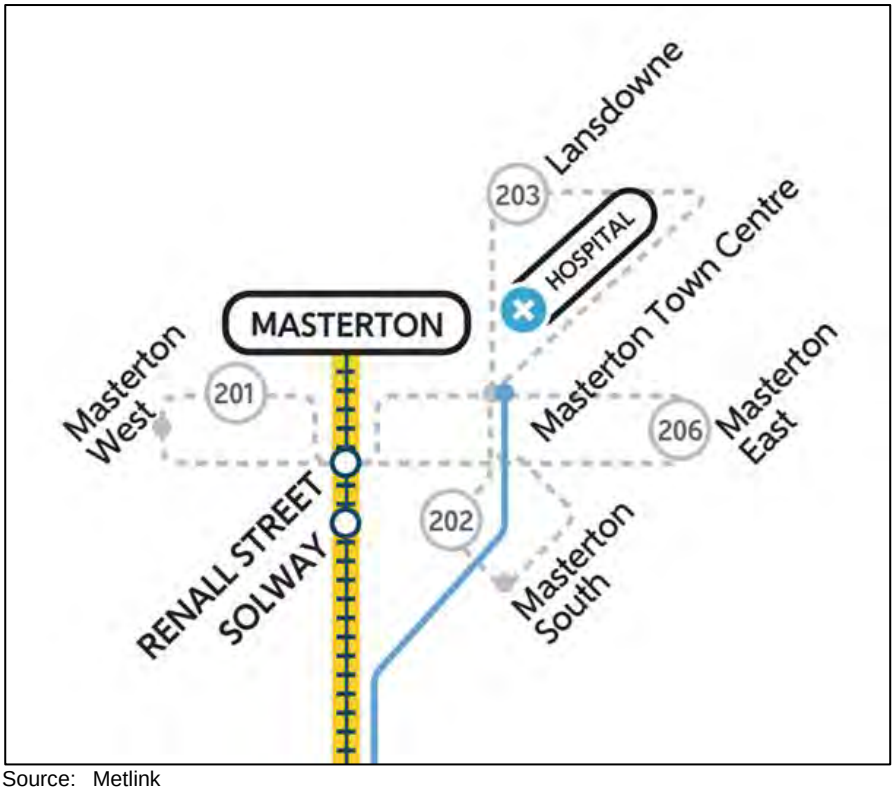
4.1.1 Masterton

Masterton has roughly the same population as Cambridge. Masterton has regular train services to Wellington on the Wairarapa Line, as well as regular bus service to other Wairarapa towns via route 200 (shown in blue in Figure 4-1) which makes some limited stops within the town.

The wider town is covered by four loop routes: 201, 202, 203 and 206. The loops operate limited trips (generally 3 trips per route per day) and operate only on weekdays from 9am to 3pm. The timetable is structured to enable a single bus to operate all twelve trips.

Figure 4-1: Public transport services in Masterton



Source: Metlink

The four loops provide a basic coverage service to the wider town. The timetable suggests they are targeted towards those who have no other transport options. It has limited use for commuters or students. Despite a connection to Renall St train station, there is no real ability for route 201 to function as a feeder service to the train given its limited timetable.

These characteristics are reflected in the boardings for these services. Each route gets around 10 boardings per day, except for route 201 which gets around 30 boardings per day, likely because it provides a connection to Wairarapa high school. This works out at around 3 passengers per trip (or 10 for roue 201).[9]

Both the train service and route 200 get substantially more boardings per trip than Masterton's local bus services, although breaking down the boardings from Masterton itself is not possible from the public information Metlink releases.

Masterton demonstrates the level of patronage that Cambridge could potentially expect if limited local services, not coordinated with the existing route 20, were introduced.

[9] Metlink performance reporting

4.1.2 Levin

Levin is a slightly smaller town than Cambridge, with just over 20,000 residents. It has one regular weekday bus service to Palmerston North, route 401 which runs one trip in each direction. This service gets around 20 passengers per trip (40 per day). Other local routes, connecting to nearby settlements like Shannon, Foxton and Otaki, run one return trip on certain weekdays only.[10]

The route network is shown in Figure 4-2, with route 401 shown in purple.

Figure 4-2: Public transport services in Levin and surrounds

Source: Horizons Regional Council

Within Levin, all services share a single stop in the town centre on Bath St. Like in Cambridge (on Victoria St), this stop is also shared with intercity bus services. The stop is located outside the library and community centre and is opposite a major supermarket.

There is only one stop in Levin, and the other centres served by the routes (including Palmerston North). This means there is no local coverage function within the towns. This minimises travel time within the settlements but reduces coverage and the potential catchment of the services. Like Cambridge, Levin's town centre has abundant free parking near the town centre, some of which is unrestricted. This means passengers who want to take the bus to Palmerston North can use some of the on-street parking as an informal park-and-ride.

Levin shows an example of town a similar size to Cambridge which does not provide local coverage but does operate service to the nearby larger urban centre. Palmerston North is around twice as far from Levin as Hamilton is from Cambridge (40km in a straight-line vs 20km). Route 401 takes slightly less time to get to Palmerston North, with a travel time of around 40 minutes, compared to route 20's hour-long travel time to the Hamilton Transport Centre.

If a local service was introduced in Cambridge, route 401 provides an example of a service which route 20 could emulate. The local services in Cambridge could provide coverage, enabling route 20 to run directly between Cambridge and Hamilton without stopping. This could, however, be less convenient for some existing route 20 passengers.

[10] Horowhenua Bus Timetable

4.1.3 Pukekohe

Pukekohe is a slightly larger town than Cambridge, with nearly 29,000 residents. It has experienced significant growth in recent years, similar to Cambridge. Like Masterton, it has a train service to Auckland, several local loop bus services (routes 391, 392 and 393). There are also other services to nearby settlements including Waiuku, Tuakau, and Paerata. These are shown in Figure 4-3. All services in the town converge on Pukekohe train station, via Massey St which has stops for the town centre.

Figure 4-3: Public transport services in Pukekohe

Source: Auckland Transport

Unlike Masterton, Pukekohe's loop services operate regularly, seven days a week. Currently, they operate every 20 minutes throughout the day. Arrivals and departures are timed to meet with train services, which also operate every 20 minutes. From mid-2026 train services will become every 15 minutes, and the bus service's frequency will be increased to match.

Each of the three loop routes carries an average of 5 to 15 passengers per in-service hour. With three trips per hour, this is around 2-5 passengers per trip, or around 450 passengers per weekday across the three services.[11] Some days this figure is higher, at around 550 boardings. Overall, Pukekohe's local services are comparable with the patronage route 20 achieves.

Auckland Transport's fare structure means that passengers transferring from these buses to the train effectively get a free bus ride. There is also limited general parking at Pukekohe Station and on nearby streets. Combined, these factors make the bus service an attractive option for those transferring to the train.

While a breakdown of destinations of the services' passengers is not available in public performance reports, bus boardings were lower while Pukekohe's train services were replaced by buses for an upgrade of the train line. This suggest most users of the loop routes are transferring to trains. Train services to Waitematā Station take 73 minutes from Pukekohe Station. This is slightly longer than route 20 takes from Cambridge to Hamilton.

Pukekohe's loop routes provide an example of the type of patronage that Cambridge could expect if quality local bus routes with connections to the Hamilton service were introduced.

[11] AT performance reporting

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4.2 On-demand service

Overview

On-demand public transport operates trips based on customer's requests for service. Unlike a traditional fixed-route service, on-demand services do not operate unless there is a request for service. In this way, they have some similarities with a taxi service.

Unlike a taxi, however, on-demand is still 'public transport' and as such customers are expected to share rides with others rather than have exclusive use of the on-demand vehicle. In practice, ride sharing only occurs when customers have similar origins and destinations.

Cambridge, as a smaller town, is potentially suitable for on-demand services. Overall demand is likely to be low (based on the internal trips on route 20 currently) and dispersed during the inter-peak hours. There are two models of on-demand service that may be appropriate in Cambridge:

- **Point-to-point** – the most common type of on-demand service, where customers and picked up and dropped off (or, as close as practicable for the vehicle to stop), rather than being required to walk to a dedicated stop.
- **Set-destination** – customers are picked up from (or returned to) their origin but can only choose a selection of pre-defined destinations. This improves the efficiency of the service by making shared rides more common.

Services may operate as a blend of these two service models, with customers directed to walk a short distance to or from a 'virtual' stop, based on the service's routing algorithm. These virtual stops may or may not be visible to customers before booking.

On-demand use cases

On-demand services are appropriate to serve areas with relatively low demand. Where demand is higher, fixed-route services generally offer higher capacity, more reliable waiting and journey times, and are more efficient to operate. A single on-demand vehicle is likely to cater to a maximum of around 8 customers per in-service hour (including with shared rides), while a single bus could easily carry 80 passengers per in-service hour (or more). The Waikato RPTP notes that on-demand service will likely struggle to meet customer expectations if boardings are over 5 people per hour, per vehicle.[12]

On-demand services can cater for more demand through introducing more vehicles, but this is not as efficient and a larger fixed-route vehicle. This efficiency is because driver costs are the key factor behind the costs of operating any public transport service. A single driver could operate either service, but both types of service offer greatly differing capacities.

On-demand is most appropriate where demand levels are low and dispersed. A single fixed-route service may have to operate a convoluted route in order to achieve the same level of coverage as an on-demand zone, but in doing so the fixed-route would offer unattractive journey times and be less useful to passengers.

On-demand services may offer the ability to pre-book a ride several days in advance or may only allow for bookings to be completed when travel is required. Pre-booking can result in limited availability of service, due to 'speculative bookings' which are not completed. Issues with this are discussed further in sub-section 4.2.3.

[12] Waikato RPTP, p. 32.

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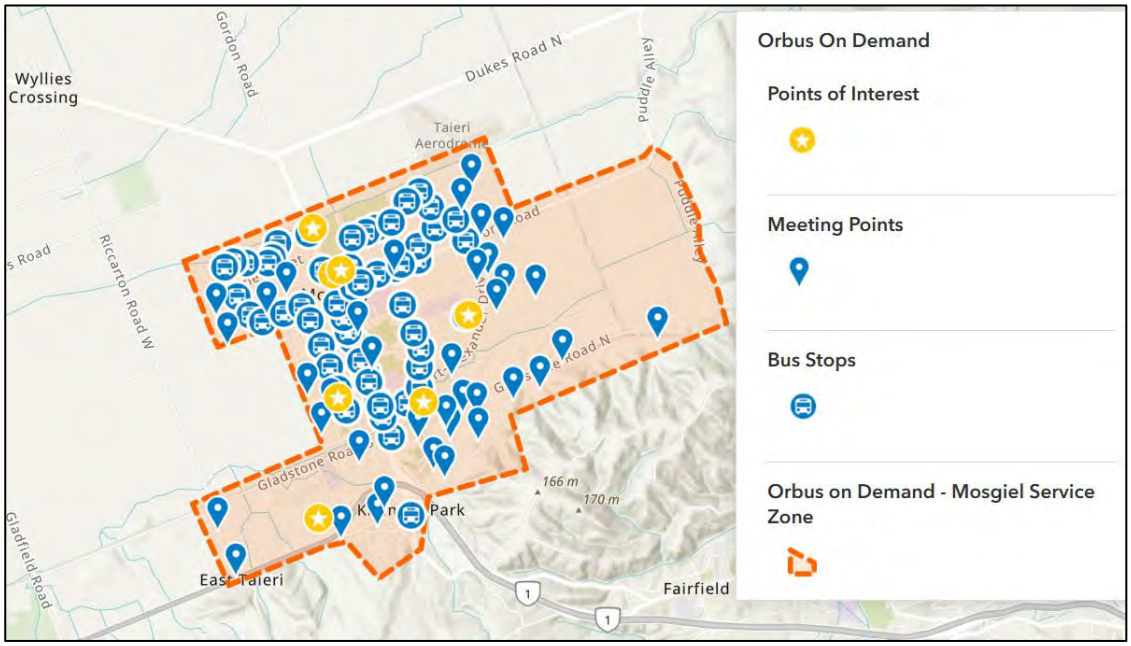
New Zealand examples

On-demand services have been trialled in New Zealand since 2018, with varying levels of success. Only one service, in Timaru, has to-date been made permanent. Currently, on-demand services operate in Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Canterbury and Otago regions.[13] A previous trial in Wellington was discontinued.

Most New Zealand examples operate as **point-to-point** services. Otago's trial in Mosgiel publicly shows a range of virtual stops but is still point-to-point in that customers can ride from any virtual (or physical) stop to any other (rather than between a stop and a pre-set destination). The information regarding these stops on the Orbus website is shown in Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4: Orbus On Demand stop viewer



Source: Orbus

The only New Zealand **set-destinations** service is in Hamilton. The *Flex* night service provides connections to and from 10 pre-set destinations in the City Centre. This service operates only on Friday and Saturday evenings (6pm to 4am), catering for trips to-and-from nightlife destinations when other public transport is generally not operating, meaning its use case is slightly different to most services across New Zealand. The destinations are shown in the service map in Figure 4-5. Trips to or from these destinations can be made from across the city.

[13] Auckland and Hawkes Bay have indicated they will end their trials in the first half of 2026, discontinuing service.

Figure 4-5: Flex set destinations

Source: Busit

The case studies in the rest of this section are both **point-to-point** examples, as they provide different examples of how on-demand service can operate and have the most publicly available information to enable comparison and analysis. Given set-destination services already operate in the Waikato, an alternative model may also be more useful to assess.

4.2.1 AT Local Takaanini

AT Local is Auckland Transport's on-demand public transport service that operates within Takaanini. The serviced area, shown in Figure 4-6, covers roughly 37,000 residents making it slightly larger than Cambridge's current population. The area has experienced significant population growth (over 10,000 new residents) in the last decade and is still growing. The service was introduced as a trial, beginning in late 2021.

Within the serviced area, train services and two bus routes operate (one bus route operates on Great South Rd, and the other on Porchester Rd, either side of the rail line). The on-demand service is primarily intended to provide access to Takaanini Station and Papakura town centre, however, it is a point-to-point service that can be used for trips across the area.

The service's fare structure is integrated with other public transport, making trips connecting to the train essentially free. Train trips to Waitematā from Takaanini take roughly 50 minutes.

Figure 4-6: AT Local Takaanini service area

Source: Auckland Transport

AT Local carries around 180 passengers per day, with its busiest recorded day carrying 270.[14] The service can be pre-booked, and it replaced a previous fixed-route service. The service is operated 7 days a week, vans and cars, with four drivers at peak, and two during off-peak. The service operates 7 days per week, (6:00 to 20:00 on weekdays and 8:00 to 18:30 weekends). This equates to an average of around 5-6 passengers per vehicle per service hour.

The service is popular, and pre-bookings are so common that many bookings are rejected either by the system due to low availability or by users as not being when they want to travel. This has led to declining customer satisfaction and increased rejected bookings. Because of these reasons, Auckland Transport is replacing the service with a fixed-route bus from April 2026.

AT Local costs roughly $1 million to operate each year.[15] Auckland Transport estimates the replacement fixed-route service will be more than twice this cost but have significantly more capacity to meet demand and therefore was their preferred option.

AT Local is an example of point-to-point service which could be operated in Cambridge, including the issues with pre-booking. These issues are discussed more in sub-section 4.2.3.

[14] AT Local: Alternative Public Transport Solutions Evaluation Report

[15] Based on the cost of the first year of the trial, from AT Local Evaluation: A Summary Report

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4.2.2 MyWay Timaru

MyWay is Timaru's on-demand service, contracted by Environment Canterbury. It is a point-to-point service which covers the entire urban area of Timaru (around 29,000 people). Timaru has experienced low population growth in the past decade, unlike Cambridge or Takaanini. MyWay's service area is shown in Figure 4-7.

The service costs $3 per ride and replaced all the previous public fixed-route services that operated in Timaru.[16] Three school bus services still operate, as MyWay does not have capacity for school demand (and services are not available near schools at school times).

Figure 4-7: MyWay Timaru service area

Source: MyWay

MyWay carries an average of 730 people per day and operates 7 days per week (6:00 to 19:00 weekdays and 8:00 to 18:00 weekends). Up to 10 drivers operate the vans at peak. Boardings per vehicle per service hour average around 7 to 9, relatively high for an on-demand service.

Services cannot be pre-booked (unlike AT Local). MyWay's call centre advises ordering the service 35 minutes in advance of when a ride is required, as service availability means there is a wait time once a booking is requested.

The service costs $3 million per year to operate, excluding the costs of operating the call centre and associated support services. This makes it roughly equivalent in terms of cost per passenger to AT Local. The service was made permanent in 2025 (following a trial since 2021), with services contracted to 2032.

Pre-booking means that the service is better able to cater for customer demand in real-time, although as noted above a wait time is still necessary. As discussed in section 4.2.3, customer satisfaction for waiting time is the lowest of all categories surveyed by Environment Canterbury for the service (along with things like vehicle cleanliness, drivers, and other comfort factors).

MyWay is an example of the type of patronage a comprehensive point-to-point service with a large fleet Cambridge could expect if on-demand services were introduced, although Timaru differs from Cambridge in that it is not close to a larger urban area. There are no public buses to Christchurch, which is a significant distance and travel time from Timaru.

[16] MyWay website

4.2.3 Learnings from on-demand case studies

As noted in sub-section 4.2.1, part of the reason Auckland Transport plan to discontinue the AT Local service is that customer demand is too high to be met by the existing fleet of drivers, which has resulted in declining customer satisfaction over the life of the service, as shown in Figure 4-8. Many customers submit that they are highly dissatisfied with the fact that they cannot book a ride at their desired time.

Figure 4-8: Customer satisfaction with AT Local

Source: AT Local: Alternative Public Transport Solutions Evaluation Report

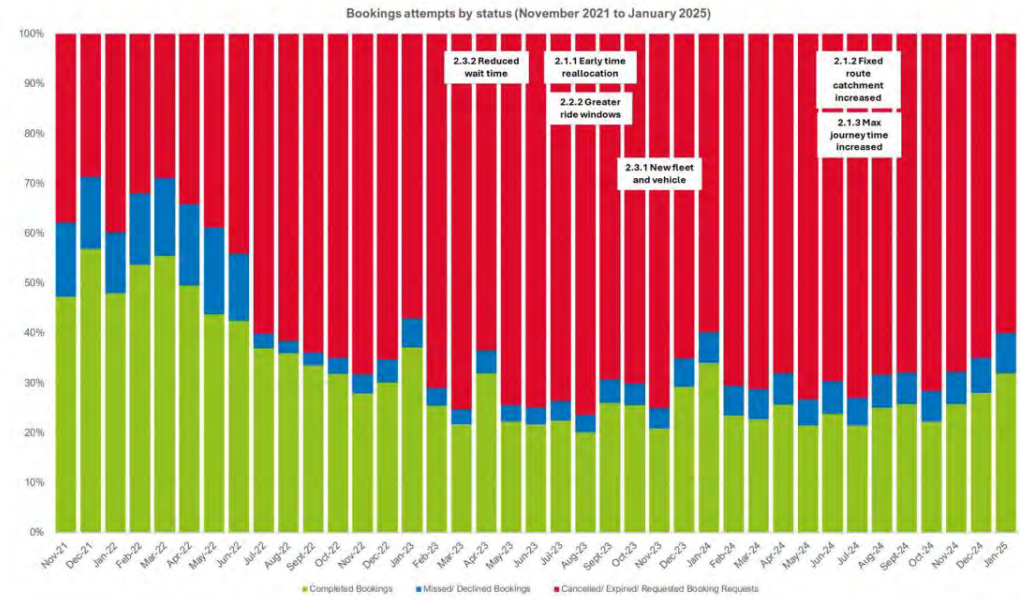
Part of the reason for this inability to travel 'on-demand' is that many customers make 'speculative bookings' far in advance, in case they need to travel in the coming week. The customer may then cancel at the last minute if they decide that they do not need to travel. These speculative bookings mean that the system considers there is no ability to make other journeys at that time.

Another factor is that there were not enough vehicles to meet demand. Utilisation is already high, at around 5-6passengers per vehicle per hour, close to the maximum an on-demand system can achieve. Auckland Transport did not have the funding available to increase the number of drivers, so could not increase capacity by simply adding more vehicles.

Auckland Transport did make several changes to try and achieve greater capacity through increased utilisation of the existing fleet. These changes to the booking system's parameters including extending the maximum journey time, refusing bookings for journeys which could use a fixed route (with customers advised on how to use those services), changes to the routing algorithm, introducing higher-capacity vehicles (changing from 10-seater to 18-seater vans), and reducing the time the driver would wait for customers at the virtual stop.

The changes to capacity did result in a slight increase in overall use of the system, which is a positive change. As shown in Figure 4-9, these changes did not have a lasting effect on the ratio of trips completed in relation to the number of attempted bookings. Over the life of the service, the red bar representing bookings that were either cancelled, expired or requested by not matched (due to a lack of availability) increased to around 60% of attempted bookings. Only around a third of attempted bookings were actually fulfilled (the green bar). This meant that, despite increasing use of the service, customer satisfaction with the service's availability was not affected.

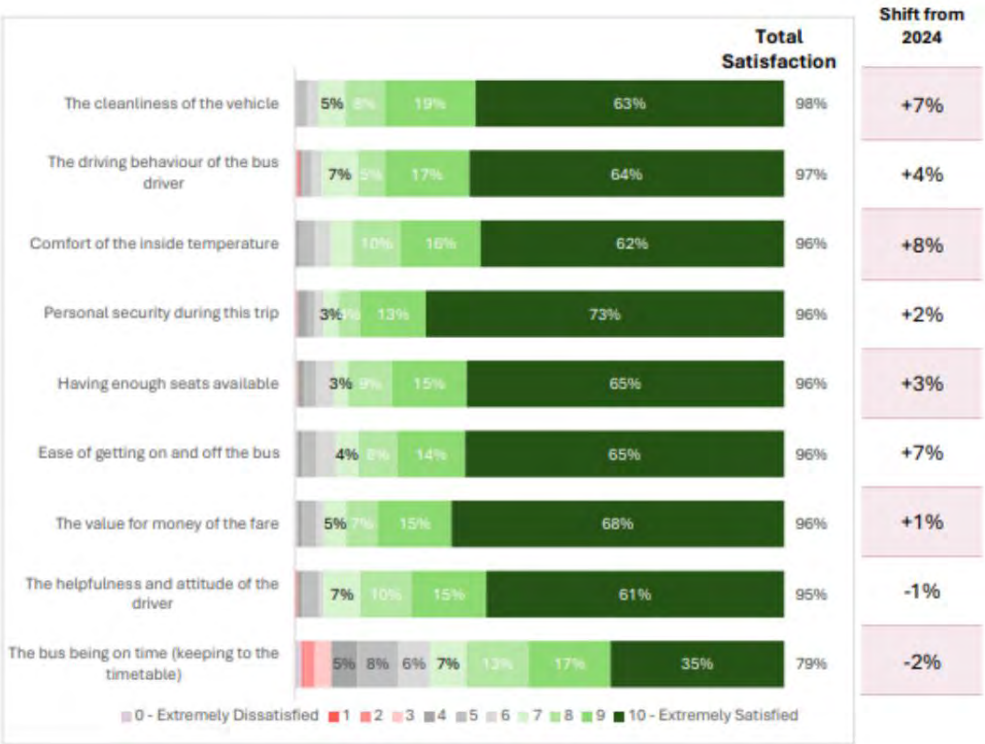
Figure 4-9: AT Local booking status



Source: AT Local: Alternative Public Transport Solutions Evaluation Report

Interestingly, despite MyWay not enabling pre-booking and having higher overall capacity than AT Local, customer satisfaction with wait times for the service (which is around 35 minutes) shows some dissatisfaction (which is higher than dissatisfaction with other factors), similarly to AT local. This is shown in Figure 4-10 (the last line shows satisfaction with wait times).

Figure 4-10: MyWay customer satisfaction



Source: Environment Canterbury Council agenda, p 104

These results from AT Local and MyWay demonstrate two key factors that should be considered in introducing a local service to Cambridge:

- **Pre-booking reduces capacity** – part of the reason for the service's unavailability is speculative pre-booking, which undermines the 'on-demand' nature of the service.
- **On-demand raises customer expectation** – while the service may be marketed as 'on-demand', in many cases service availability will be such that wait times are not perceived as acceptable by some customers. This results in lower customer satisfaction, as their experience of the service doesn't match their expectation of it.

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4.3 Hybrid service

Fixed-route and on-demand services can be combined in a variety of ways to provide a hybrid service. Two potential combinations are relevant to consider for Cambridge:

- **Call-off service** – where a nominal fixed route service with defined stops operates to a timetable, but customers can request a stop closer to their origin or destination.
- **Mixed service** – where fixed-route services operate for part of the day and on-demand service operates during the other part.

Call-off service

Call-off service has become less common since the introduction of app-based on-demand services. They have previously operated in New Zealand; Auckland Transport ran the 'Kowhai Connection' bus service as a call-off service before it was replaced with traditional routes, due to growing demand.

Few examples of this type of service remain worldwide, as it can be inconvenient for passengers to deviate from the fixed route, given this lengthens travel times (making them less reliable for customers). Set-destination on-demand service has replaced many of these services, particularly in Europe.

This type of service is most suitable for locations where the fixed stops are far apart. This reduces the amount of 'backtracking' required for the service to return to the fixed route. Rural areas are a good use case for this type of service.

Mixed service

Mixed services operate in a variety of locations, including North America and Europe. These often replace a fixed bus service with on-demand services, particularly during the interpeak and/or evening periods. This can allow for a more efficient distribution of resources during quiet periods, while ensuring capacity is available at peak periods to meet high demand.

The on-demand component of this service could operate as either point-to-point or set-destination service. In some cases where set destinations are used, customers may still have to walk to a traditional bus stop. Using the stop may be either for efficiency of the service's routing, and/or to ensure the vehicle can stop safely.

Mixed service may operate with either the same fleet during both periods, or different vehicles.

The following sub-sections provide an example of each service model.

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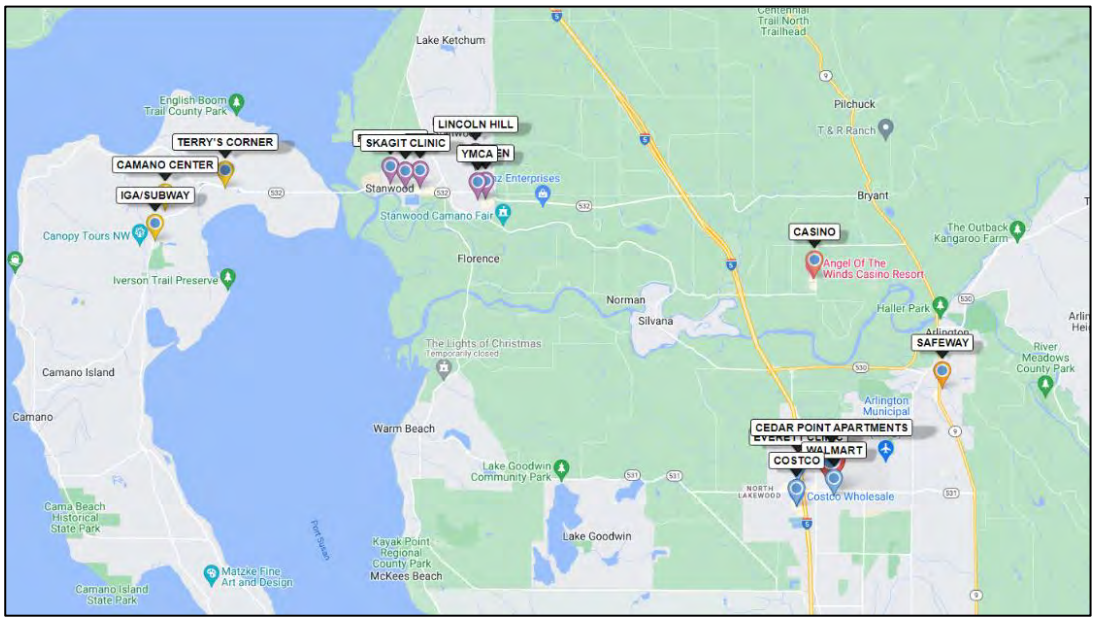
4.3.1 Snowgoose Transit

Operating in northern Washington State, USA, Snowgoose Transit is a community-operated **call-off service.** Two nominal fixed routes operate, with on-demand stops accepted within ¾ mile of the fixed routes. The service is free-of-charge to users, and operates seven round trips per day, weekdays only.

The service connects an area which has no public transit, Camano Island, to Stanwood and Arlington which do have public transit (including connections south to Seattle). The routes cover an area of roughly 54,000 people, although parts of this area do have other services.

The services' routes are roughly 30kms long and take around 2.5 hours to complete a roundtrip.[17] The fixed stops are shown in Figure 4-11.

Figure 4-11: Snowgoose Transit fixed stop locations



Source: Snowgoose Transit

Requests for deviations from the route have to be made in advance. Requests by new users must be made 48 hours in advance, while return riders' bookings must be made 24 hours in advance. Locations are assessed to ensure that they are safe for the service to stop at.

Roughly 30 people per day use the services, across the seven round trips. This means each trip carries an average of 4-5 passengers.

This sort of service is unlikely to be suitable in Cambridge, given the town's smaller area would mean a shorter distance between stops. It is included here to illustrate a service model that could conceptually be applied.

[17] Snowgoose Transit website

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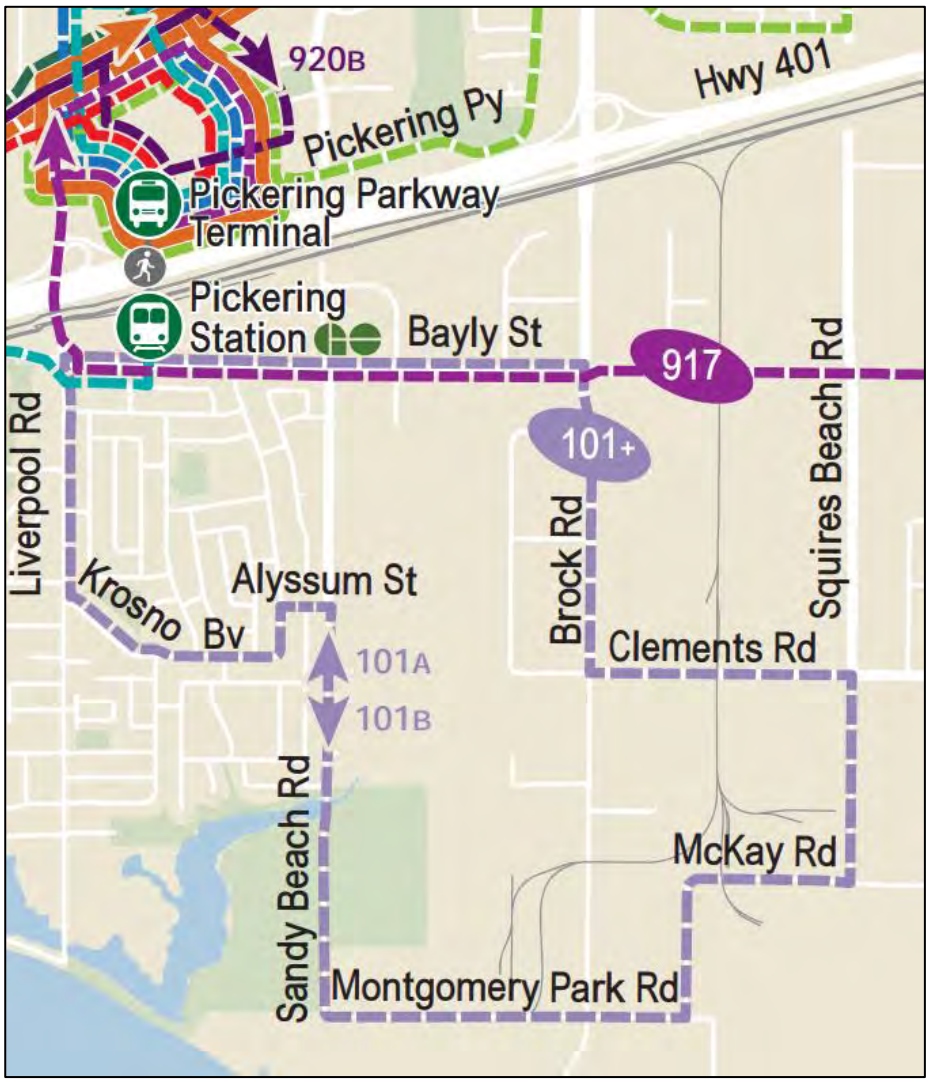
4.3.2 Durham Region Transit

Durham is a region in Ontario, Canada, to the east of the province's capital, Toronto. The region has around 540,000 residents. The entire region is covered by an on-demand service that operates whenever fixed-route services are not operating (including overnight in urban areas).[18] This makes it an example of **mixed-service** provision.

On-demand services cover both the rural and urban areas of the region. Within the urban area, users must still walk to a bus stop to wait for the on-demand service (which will not accept a request if a bus is scheduled at the stop within 30 minutes or is within 10 minutes' walk of another operating bus service).

Some fixed-route services, like route 101 (shown in Figure 4-12) operate at peak times only to provide connections to GO Train stations, with on-demand services covering their catchment at other times. Customers must travel to another bus stop, but this does not have to be one on the same fixed route.

Figure 4-12: Fixed route 101 within Durham's urban area



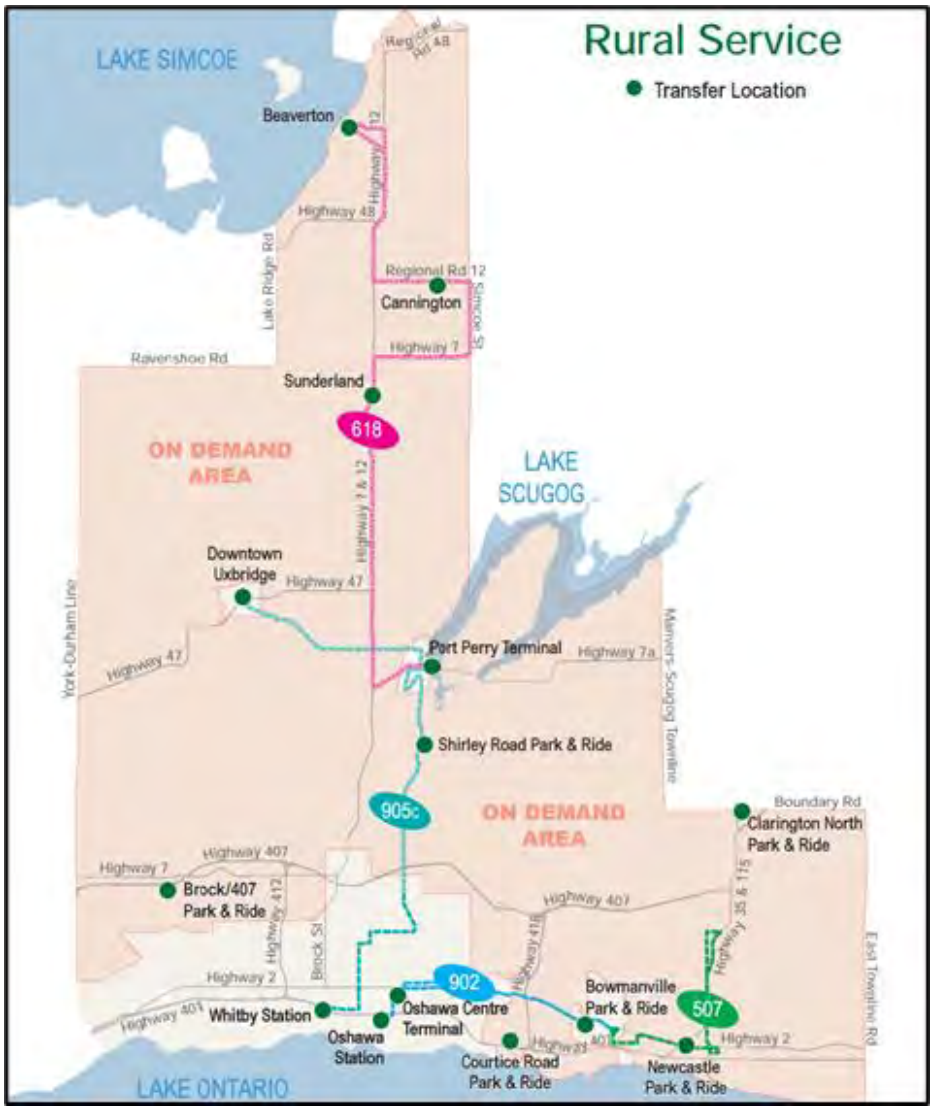
Source: Durham Region Transit

[18] Durham Region Transit On Demand services

Customers with mobility needs can also apply to be picked up from their home, rather than needing to walk to a bus stop. In this way, the service also acts as a paratransit service for those who cannot access regular services.

Within the rural area, the service is intended to connect to users to operating bus services. Customers either walk to a bus stop or may be picked up at their driveway in smaller settlements. The transfer locations are shown in Figure 4-13. The service is therefore an example of **set-destination** on-demand service.

Figure 4-13: Durham Region Transit service area



Source: Durham Region Transit

The on-demand service won an award from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for improving access to services through its on-demand service.[19] The service enables pre-booking one day in advance. Fares are integrated into the wider transit system.

Durham Region's service is an example of how Cambridge could apply the mixed-service concept, to provide access to both route 20 and other key destinations.

[19] Durham Region Transit

4.4 Subsidised service

Rather than contracting a public service to operate, an alternative model would be to subsidise trips on existing private providers. This could mean subsiding taxis, or a provider like Uber.

This concept would be similar to how the existing Total Mobility scheme operates. Customers would call the private provider, show their eligibility for the subsidy, and pay the difference between the full and subsidised fare. A maximum distance or set service area could be set, to restrict the length and purpose of trips.

There are two ways a subsidy can be applied:

- **Set fare** – customers know in advance the cost of their trip, and everything above this set fare is subsidised by the public transport agency.
- **Set subsidy** – a flat discount (the subsidy) is applied to each fare, with users paying the difference.

The example used in sub-section 4.4.1 shows an application of both subsidy models.

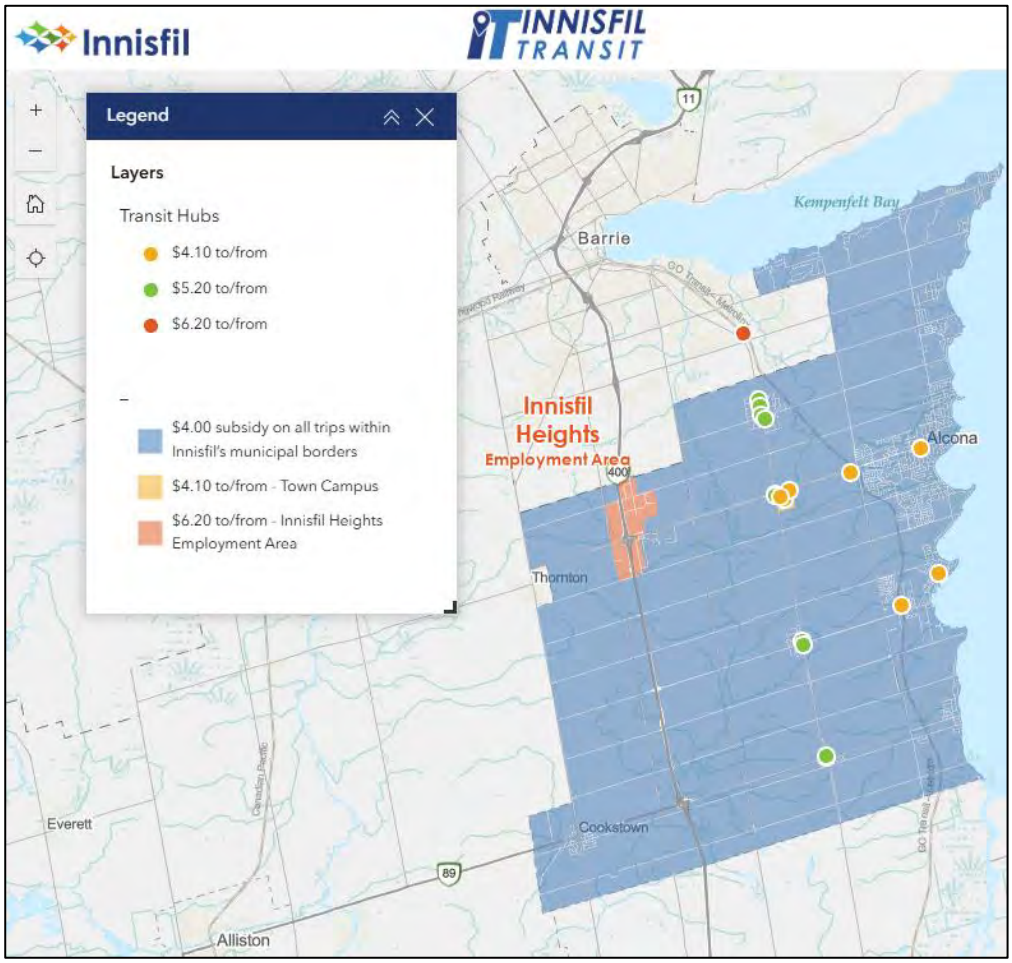
There are a range of potential risks with this concept, which are discussed in terms of their relevance to Cambridge in section 5.4.

4.4.1 Innisfil Transit

Innisfil is a small, largely rural community in northern Ontario, Canada, with around 43,000 residents. There is no traditional public transit within the municipality, although a GO Train station which provides services south to Toronto is located just to the north.

Innisfil partnered with Uber to provide public transit coverage across the town. Trips to **set-destinations**, shown as orange, green and red dots and yellow or orange zones in Figure 4-14, are eligible for a **set fare.** Point-to-point trips are also available, with a **set subsidy** applied outside of the set destinations (shown as the blue zone).[20]

Figure 4-14: Innisfil Transit service area and set fare locations



Source: Innisfil Transit

Residents download vouchers to apply in the Uber app to claim their subsidy. Users are eligible for 30 vouchers per month, with low-income riders eligible for an additional 20 per month. The system provides for around 470 trips daily.

The system costs Innisfil around $2.2 million (New Zealand dollars) to operate every year.

Innisfil provides an example of what a subsidised system could look like and how many users it might carry if it were applied to Cambridge, although Innisfil is a slightly more rural and dispersed area with a larger population.

[20] Innisfil Transit

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4.5 Comparison of service models

The different service models in the case studies have different levels of usage and different operating costs. These are summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.**. Operating c osts for fixed-route bus services can vary across New Zealand and are not known for the individual services described in the case studies. The rates for WRC's existing Waipā bus contract have been applied to enable high-level comparison.[21] The operating costs of the hybrid models are not known and have therefore been excluded (but could reasonably be assumed to be a mid-point between fixed-route and on-demand services).

Table 4-2: Service model comparison table

Service Model	Location	Population	Annual Patronage	Cost p.a. ($) (approx.)	Cost per passenger ($)
Fixed Route	Cambridge	22,700	140,000	1,050,000	7.50
	Masterton	22,500	15,000	170,000	11.33
	Levin	20,400	10,000	140,000	14.00
	Pukekohe	29,000	160,000	1,500,000	9.37
On Demand	Takaanini	37,000	65,000	1,070,000	16.46
	Timaru	29,000	267,000	3,050,000	11.42
Subsidised	Innisfil, Ontario	43,000	172,000	2,200,000	12.79

Source: Mott MacDonald, adapted from various sources

These figures demonstrate that:

- **Fixed-route services** are generally cheaper to operate that on-demand services on a cost-per-passenger basis, even for coverage services that are not as well-used. Given all costs are based on WRC rates for the rural Waipā contract (rather than an urban contract which may have lower costs), the actual costs of these services may vary more than shown (and may be lower).
- **On-demand services** vary but generally have higher costs compared fixed-route services on a per-passenger basis.
- **Subsidised service** in Innisfil has a similar cost per-passenger as MyWay in Timaru. There does not appear to be an advantage in providing these services privately compared to contracting a service publicly, although this is based on a single example.

[21] The existing Waipā contract covers both the Cambridge (route 20) and Te Awamutu (route 21) services. The figures used here are the approximate cost of route 20 only.

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5 Long-list options

Eight potential options for providing local public transport service for Cambridge have been identified. All of these options provide some form of local public transport service to the town, including the growth areas.

The eight options are based on the four service model categories set out in section 4: There are different numbers of options for each service model:

1. **Fixed-route** services – 3 options
2. **On-demand** services – 2 options
3. **Hybrid** services – 2 options
4. **Subsidised** services – 1 option

This long-list of options will be refined to a short-list of options for further consideration. The assessment of the options is presented in section 6, and the short-listed options are described in section 7. Development of the short-listed options is a part of the next phase of work (Technical Report 2).

The following sub-sections set out the details of each option.

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5.1 Fixed route options

Three fixed-route options have been identified. These are:

A. Supplementary service.
B. Comprehensive service.
C. Regional branch service.

All three options are a different concept for how local services would operate within Cambridge. A key difference between the options is the relationship between the local service(s) and the regional service.

At this long-listing stage, no specific routes are proposed. The key choice to be made is what type of service should be provided. The recommended route(s) for that service will be identified in more detail in the next phase of work (short-listing, in Technical Report 2). Routes shown on the option maps are illustrative only, intended to visually represent how the option could work rather than suggesting a specific possible route.

All options are assumed to have the same general operating hours (which will be specified in the next phase of work), with specific hours depending on the service. The frequency of the services is assumed to be regular throughout the day (like the Pukekohe case study as opposed to Masterton) and would be expected to be at least hourly, with more frequent service at peak times, in line with WRC's RPTP.

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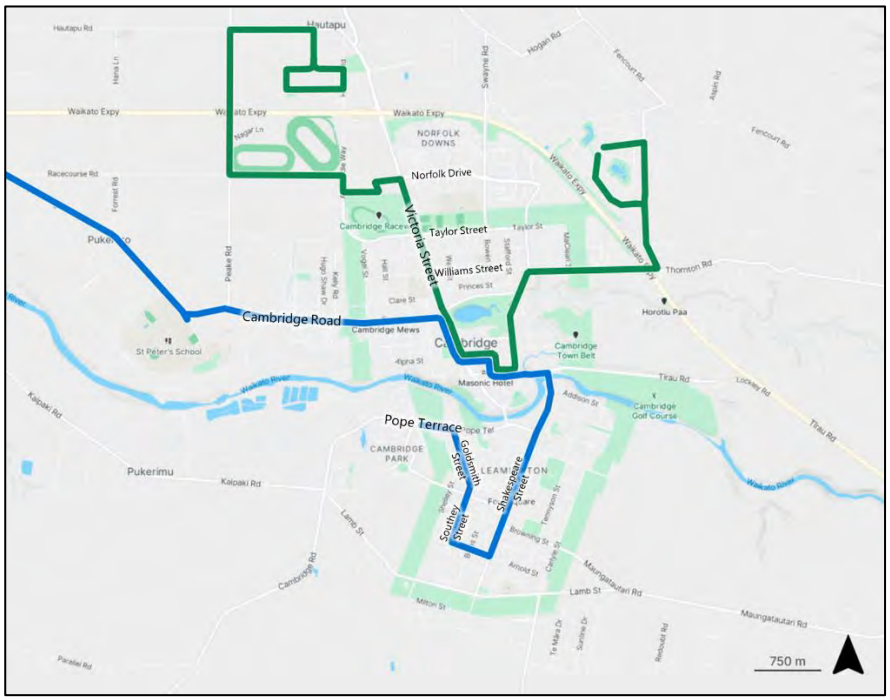
5.1.1 Option A – Supplementary service

In this option, a new local route supplements the existing regional service (route 20) to expand coverage in Cambridge. This concept is shown in Figure 5-1, with a possible supplementary service shown in green and the existing route 20 shown blue.

Figure 5-1: Supplementary route concept



Source: Mott MacDonald

The local service could theoretically be timetabled to provide a timed connection to route 20, for passengers to transfer to continue their journey to Hamilton. It is likely that each departure of the regional service could only be met by one trip of the local service (that is, the eastern part of the local route would have a timed transfer on one trip, and the western half on the following trip). This could reduce the usefulness of the transfer. Additional frequency on the local route could prevent this, however, demand for the local service might not be able to justify such frequency (except potentially at peak times).

The regional service could be either:

- Retained on its current route (to Leamington, as shown above), meaning the local route would serve the northern parts of Cambridge, or
- Modified to run to the eastern part of Cambridge (e.g., St Kilda), meaning the local service would run north-south (e.g., from Hautapu to Leamington).

The existing charging infrastructure for electric bus services is located to the west of the current route 20 terminus, in Leamington. Given the cost involved with installing additional charging infrastructure elsewhere, and the greater need for the longer-distance route to charge, it may make most sense to retain the regional service to Leamington and leave the local service to cover the northern areas of Cambridge.

In this option, local services could be operated by smaller vehicles (such as vans or mini-buses), depending on peak demand. The same vehicle would operate service throughout the day, to reduce the overall fleet size.

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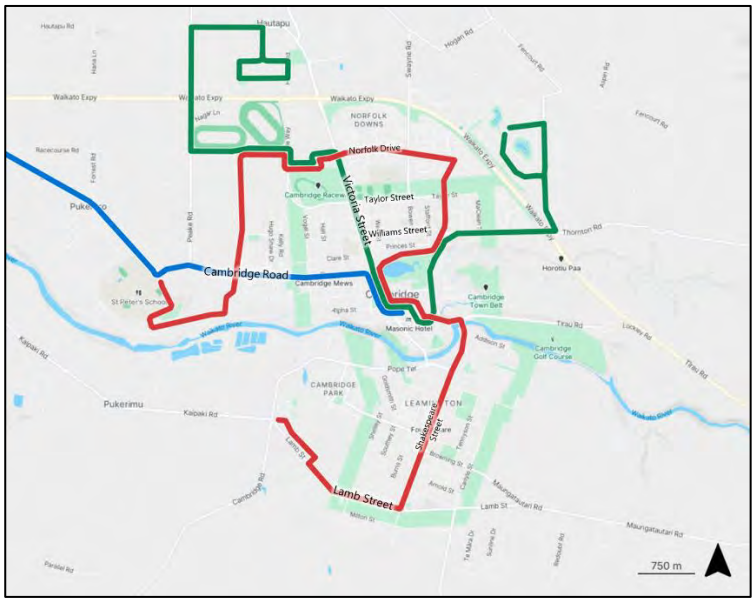
5.1.2 Option B – Comprehensive service

In this option, multiple local routes provide coverage in Cambridge. The existing regional route would be shortened, to terminate in the town centre (so as to avoid duplicating service). The local services would provide connections to the regional service in the town centre for onward journey to Hamilton. This concept is shown in Figure 5-2, with the regional route shown blue and the local routes red and green.

Figure 5-2: Comprehensive service concept



Source: Mott MacDonald

Services could be timetabled to provide a timed connection to the regional service in the town centre. This would likely only be achievable for half of each local route for each departure of the regional service (e.g., east and south get a connection on one trip, and west and north on another trip). Higher service frequencies could provide a connection from every direction on each trip, however, demand for the local service might not be able to justify such frequency (except potentially at peak times).

This option would allow for a change to the regional route, to run to Hamilton more directly via Victoria St and the Waikato Expressway. The local service would then cover off the existing catchment (along Cambridge Rd and Hamilton Rd).

Given there is no charging infrastructure in the town centre, the regional bus would still need to run out-of-service back to the depot (in Leamington) to recharge between some trips. This could be perceived as inefficient (although out-of-service travel is not part of contractual service costs, but may be factored into the overall contract cost).

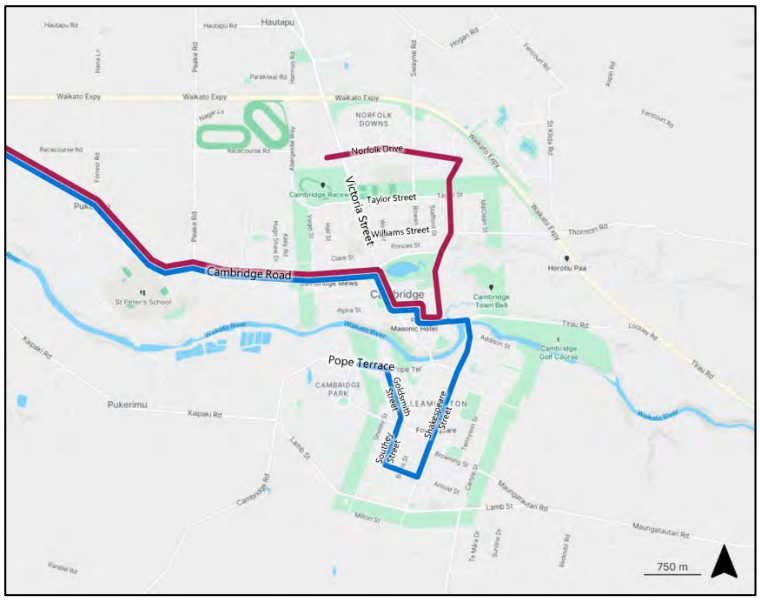
This option risks operating a level of service in Cambridge that is not supported by demand (in other words, too much local service). Careful service planning would be required to provide services that are attractive and well-used. It may be that Option A could evolve into Option B over time, as Cambridge grows and additional service is justified.

In this option, local services could be operated by smaller vehicles (such as vans or mini-buses), depending on peak demand. The same vehicle would operate service throughout the day, to reduce the overall fleet size.

5.1.3 Option C – Regional branch service

In this option, an additional branch of the regional service would operate, extending coverage to the northern part of Cambridge. The existing route 20 would continue operating as the other branch, covering Leamington. This concept is shown in Figure 5-3, with the existing route 20 shown in blue and the new branch service in red.

Figure 5-3: Regional branch service concept



Source: Mott MacDonald

In this concept, the regional service operates slightly more frequently that currently (at least every 30 minutes throughout the day). Both branches would operate a common section along Cambridge Rd, Hamilton Rd and Victoria St to the town centre. The branches would split after the town centre, at the intersection of Duke St and Albert St. Half of the trips would continue to one branch, and half the other, alternating so that each branch had (at least) hourly service. This would mean a slightly reduction in frequency to Leamington, but an improvement for where the majority of existing boardings occur (on Victoria St).

This option strikes a balance between increasing coverage of northern Cambridge for public transport (which allows for local trips to the town centre) and improving the regional service (which is shown to be well used and is likely to experience continued demand).

Timetabling of the branches could avoid the need to install new charging infrastructure for electric buses at the northern end of the route. If each bus alternated branches, they could then recharge at the end of the Leamington branch before operating their next trip. Alternatively, an appropriate site to install charging infrastructure could be found in northern Cambridge (e.g., as part of a new commercial development).

Given buses would likely be shared across both branches to reduce overall fleet requirements and cater for peak time passenger demand, traditional and double-deck buses would operate this service.

This concept was previously identified as the preferred approach to improving service in Cambridge in the 2024 *PT Pathways* report.[22]

[22] *Hamilton Waikato Metro Spatial Plan Public Transport Pathways Technical Report 2, 2024, p.15*

5.2 On-demand options

Two on-demand options have been identified, in-line with the service model concepts. These are:

D. Point-to-point on-demand.
E. Set destination on-demand.

Both options would use the same service area. An indicative service area is shown in the figures below, which excludes some growth cells (C5, part of C9, C10, C11) which are not expected to be (fully) developed by 2037. The zone could expand to those areas in the future. The exact boundary of the zone will be refined in the next phase of work (short-listing). The 'pins' shown on both maps are intended to be indicative only, to illustrate the differences between the concepts rather than suggesting actual pick-up and drop-off locations.

The total service area is about roughly 8km wide. For a person driving a car, a journey from Cambridge's town centre to the edge of the zone would typically take 10 to 15 minutes. On-demand services usually allow a maximum customer journey time of 2-3 times the maximum direct travel time, to account for shared rides. A single vehicle may therefore be able to make roughly three drop-offs on its way from the centre to the edge of the zone. This would vary depending on overall demand volumes and destinations.

Overall, this suggests a maximum fleet required to service the town of around three vehicles, although this will be refined in the next stage of work (short-listing). The same type of fleet, likely vans or mini-buses, are assumed to operate both options.

Both options could operate as either allowing or not allowing pre-booking. Pre-booking generally results in poorer service availability, as discussed in section 4.2, and so is not recommended. Both options are assumed to have the same operating hours (which will be specified in the next phase of work).

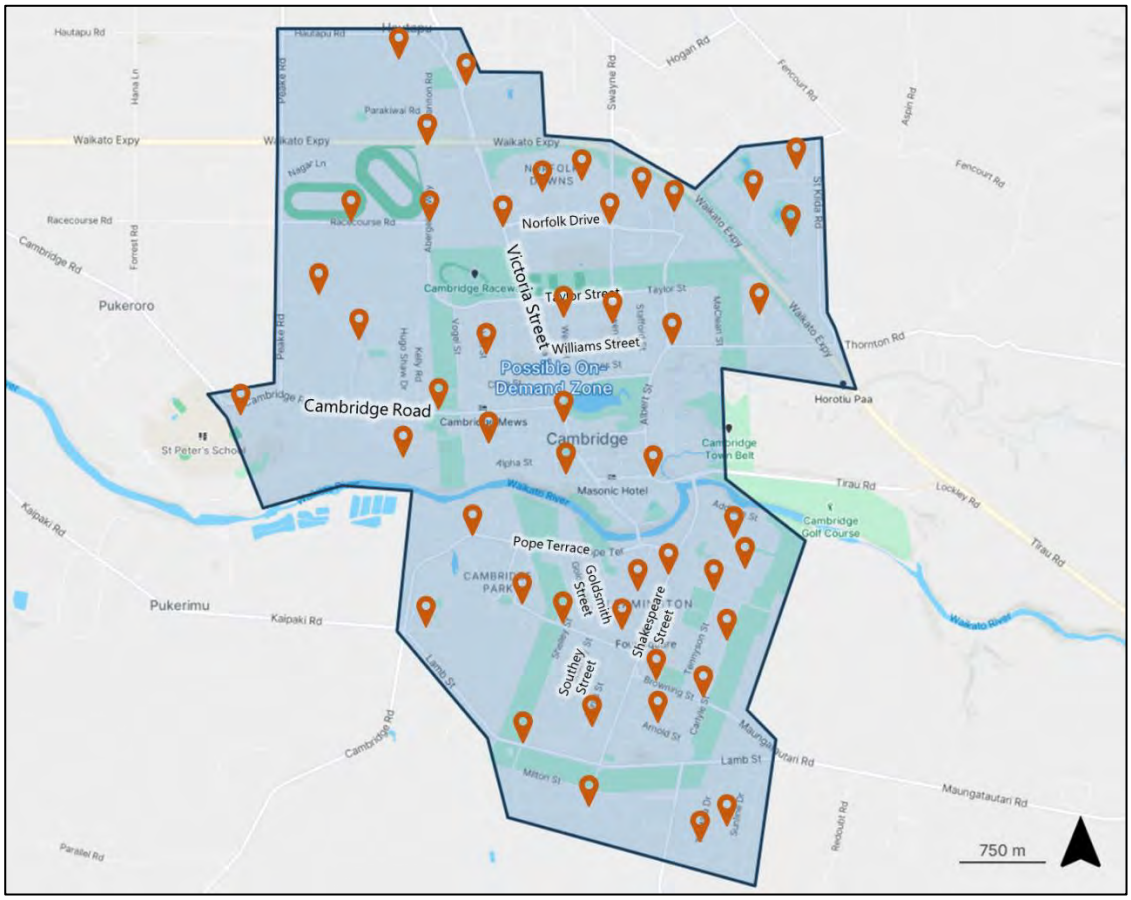
A maximum wait time for customers would be expected to be in-line with other services in New Zealand, at around 30 minutes (although this would vary depending on customer demand). This could be made shorter if required and if funding was available (as a larger fleet would be required). The anticipated wait time would be specified in the next phase of work.

5.2.1 Option D – Point-to-point

In this option, on-demand services operate across the Cambridge urban area (including Hautapu and Leamington). Customers can request a ride between any two points within the service area. The system would assign a 'virtual bus stop' that the passenger would be collected from, which might require a short walk. The service is not 'door-to-door' but does minimise walking distance to the service.

This concept is shown in Figure 5-4. The pins in the figure are not intended to represent the virtual bus stops, but serve to enable a visual contrast with the figure for Option E.

Figure 5-4: Point-to-point on-demand concept



Source: Mott MacDonald

This option could operate alongside the existing regional bus service to Hamilton. Route 20 would continue to operate to Leamington (rather than being shortened to the town centre) in order to reduce demand for transfers for the on-demand service. This would also maximise the efficiency of route 20 returning to the depot to charge.

Given point-to-point on-demand services are less likely to result in shared rides as set-destination services, this option may require a slightly larger fleet or may not serve as many passengers per hour as Option E.

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5.2.2 Option E – Set destinations

In this option, on-demand services operate across the Cambridge urban area (including Hautapu and Leamington). Customers can request a ride from near their origin point to one of the fixed destinations available. The system would assign a 'virtual bus stop' that the passenger would be collected from, which might require a short walk. For the return journey, the customer would select one of the pre-set destinations for pick-up and enter any point for drop-off. T

This concept is shown in Figure 5-5. The pins in the figure are not intended to represent the virtual bus stops, but serve to enable a visual contrast with the figure for Option D.

Figure 5-5: Set destination on-demand concept

Source: Mott MacDonald

Given Cambridge's land use, with a strong town centre and limited other key destinations, this option has the potential to work very efficiently. One or two stops to serve the town centre would result in clustering of demand that would maximise shared rides, and therefore the overall efficiency of the service.

The exact destinations available in this option would be determined in the next phase on work (short-listing). Additional destinations could be added over time, such as if a new commercial centre were developed in the growth areas. Destinations could also be time-restricted, for example to prevent trips to destinations outside of their operating hours.

In this option, route 20 could be shortened to the town centre with the on-demand service acting as a feeder service (enabling customers to transfer to the regional service). The main regional bus stop in the town centre would be one of the set destinations. Given there is no charging infrastructure in the town centre, the regional bus would still need to run out-of-service back to the depot (in Leamington) to recharge between some trips. This could be perceived as inefficient (although out-of-service travel is not part of contractual service costs, but may be factored into the overall contract cost).

Depending on the number of destinations and the level of passenger demand, there may be some requirement for infrastructure at the set-destination stops (such as dedicated stopping areas, shelters, lighting and other amenities) comparable to a traditional bus stop.

Given set-destination services allow for more efficient routing and reduced wait times for customers, this option may require a reduced fleet compared to Option D or enable more passengers to be carried by the same fleet size.

5.3 Hybrid options

Two hybrid options have been identified, in-line with the service model concepts, which mix fixed-route and on-demand service. These are:

F. Call-off service.
G. Mixed service.

Both options would use the same service area for the on-demand service as described in section 5.2, which again could expand to include new growth areas as the developed.

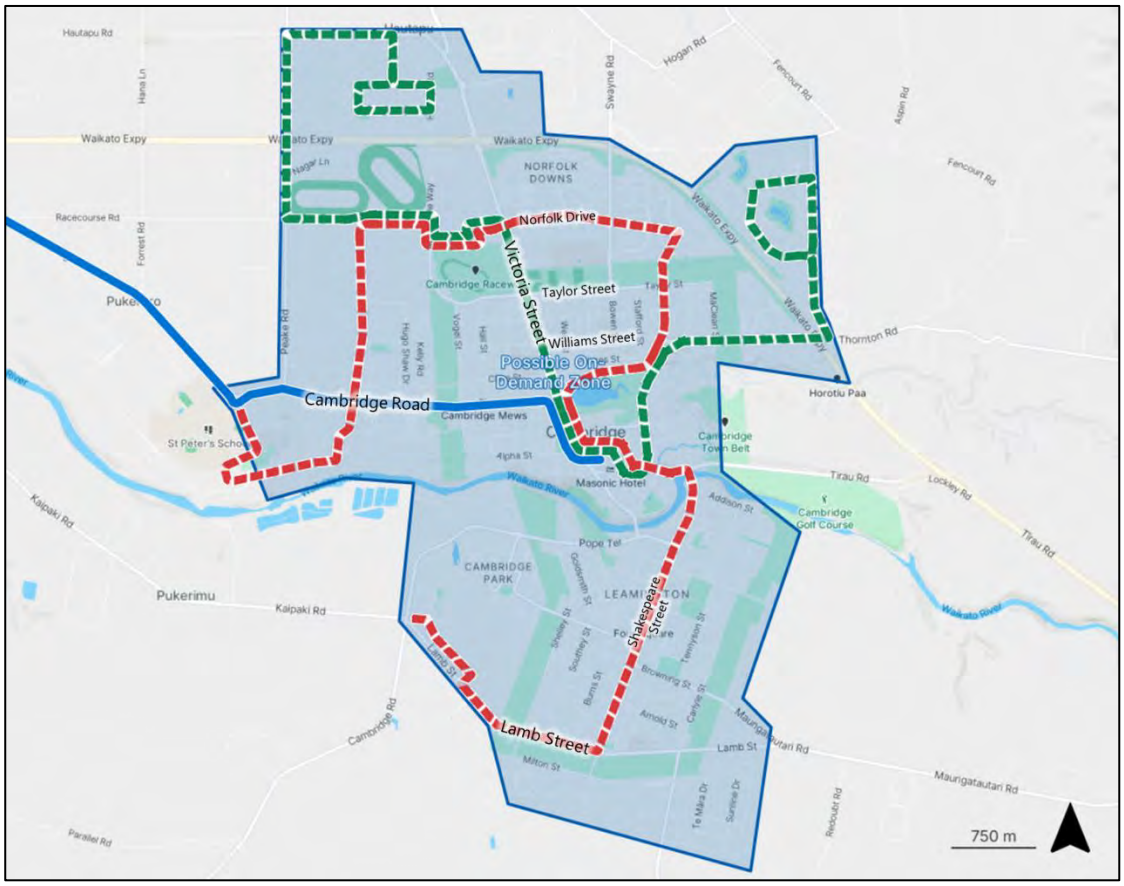
The fixed-route services in both options are based on the Comprehensive Service option (D), as this best aligns with the coverage on-demand services provide when the fixed routes are not operating. The fixed routes would cover off the wider Cambridge area and provide connections to a shortened regional service in the town centre. As with the fixed-route options in section 5.1, the routes shown in the figures of this section are illustrative only and will be refined in the next phase of work (short-listing).

The wait time for the services would be in-line with those of the fixed-route and on-demand options (A-E).

5.3.1 Option F – Call-off service

In this option, fixed route services operate but can be called to other destinations off the route by customers in advance. The call-off area could be the wider area shown below or refined to be closer to the routes. The vehicle would divert off to pick-up or set-down passengers, before returning to the fixed route. This concept is shown in Figure 5-6, with the regional route shown blue, local services shown red and green (with the dashed lines indicated flexible routing).

Figure 5-6: Call-off-service concept



Source: Mott MacDonald

The fixed-route services in this option would benefit from wider-than-usual bus stop spacing, so that diversions from the fixed route can then travel to the next fixed stop as directly as possible while minimising back-tracking (which customers would perceive as inefficient).

Smaller vehicles, such as vans or mini-buses, would be most appropriate to operate this type of service as it would maximise the number of streets that would be suitable to use.

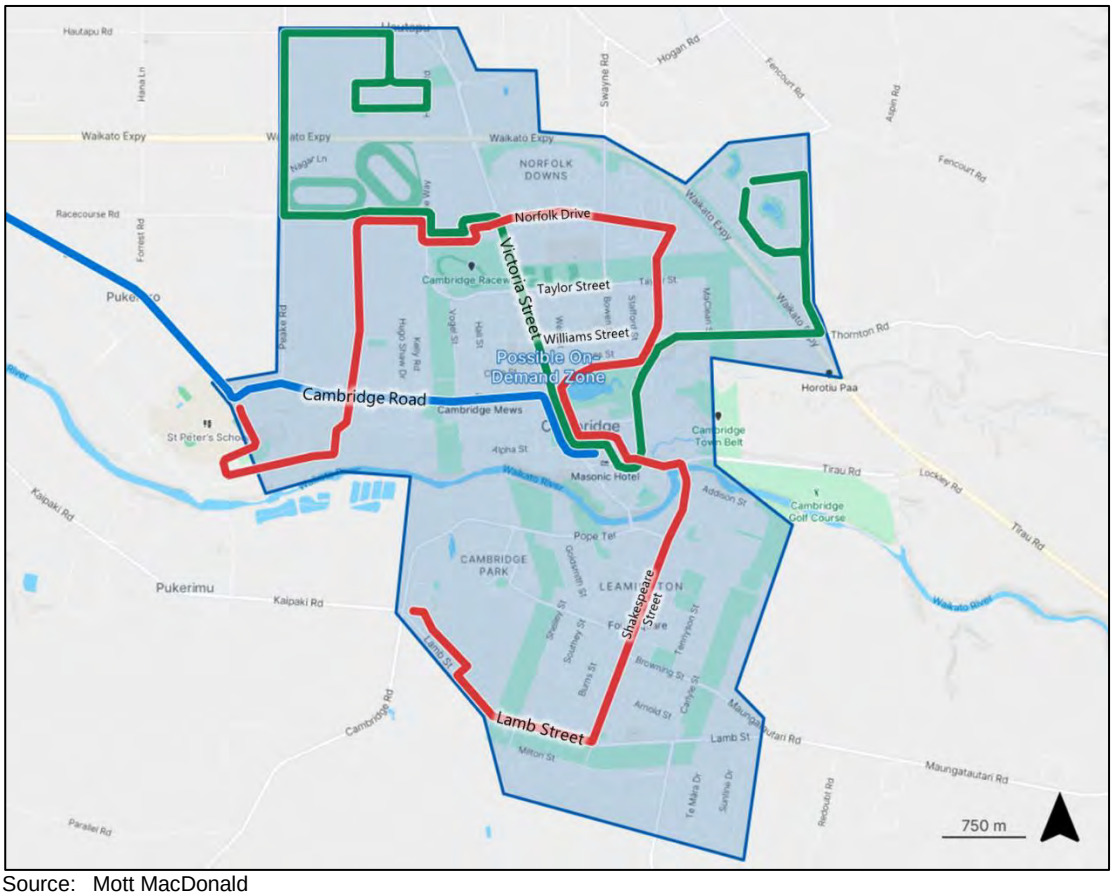
The regional service, shortened to the town centre, would not operate as a call-off service in order to best stick to its timetable. The local services would act as feeder services to the regional route, but timing a transfer would be harder (compared to other options) given the call-off nature makes the total trip time harder to predict. A wider transfer buffer would need to be built into the indicative timetable, which would be less convenient for transferring passengers.

Given the unpredictability of travel times (both at peak and interpeak), this option is likely to be less convenient to passengers than other options.

5.3.2 Option G – Mixed service

In this option, fixed route services operate at peak times and on-demand services operate between the peaks (during the middle of the day). The same vehicles would be used during both peaks (likely vans or mini-buses). The on-demand service could operate either as point-to-point or using set destinations. This concept is shown in Figure 5-6 with the regional route shown blue, local services shown red and green.

Figure 5-7: Mixed service concept



Source: Mott MacDonald

This option is intended to maximise the potential usage of services at all times of day. When demand is greatest, at peak times, fixed routes operate with the intention of providing maximum connectivity to the regional route (as well serving other destinations) and utilising as much of that capacity as possible (as fixed-route utilisation has the potential to be greater than on-demand utilisation). The services would be timed to meet the regional route's trips to and from Hamilton. During the middle of the day, when demand is lower, on-demand service would operate to maximise both coverage and potential use of the service. As such, set-destination is recommended as the appropriate on-demand model for the service.

The regional service, while shortened to the town centre, would continue to operate all-day. It would not be part of the interpeak on-demand offering.

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5.4 Subsidised options

Only one option for subsidised services has been identified, which is Option H.

5.4.1 Option H – Subsidised service

In this option, private provider(s) of transport, such as taxi services or Uber, would be paid a subsidy to carry passengers on trips within Cambridge. A defined service area for eligibility would be set out, similar to the on-demand zone in section 5.2. Trips within this area would be eligible for the subsidy. Hours of eligibility could also be set.

A way for residents to prove their eligibility for the service would be required. This could be similar to, or even built on, the existing Total Mobility scheme. Customers would show their eligibility for the service to the driver, or log it on the app. They would then be eligible for either a set fare (with the difference subsidised) or a set discount on the overall fare (with the customer paying the difference, similar to Total Mobility).

There are a range of risks involved with this option, which include:

- The ability to predict subsidy cost is low, particularly in early years of the service, as the extent of uptake is unknown (given a different and potentially more variable pricing structure compared to traditional public transport)
- Limited ability to regulate costs the private operators charge. While costs can be fixed for customers, this risks a higher burden on WRC.
- Costs and staffing needed to manage the eligibility for service, introducing an administrative overhead cost.
- If the same operator(s) also operate the existing Total Mobility offering, there is a potential that the subsidised general service will lead to a degradation of Total Mobility service (if operators preference subsidised rides or high demand leads to reduced availability of service).
- Other parts of the District or Regional which don't have this service may perceive it as an unfair 'premium' service that Cambridge benefits from, leading to reputational risk and/or demands for this service to be extended to other locations.

This type of service, other than Total Mobility, does not currently operate in New Zealand. Given both this option and Total Mobility are not traditional public transport (in that they are privately operated), funding for these services is also different. Under the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA), the service would need to be approved for funding by NZTA (as it would need to be procured differently than traditional services). Such approval is not guaranteed.[23]. If NZTA is not willing to contribute towards the funding of the service, the operating costs could be unsustainable for WRC.

The availability of the service would be up to the private operators. WRC may have limited ability to influence this, but would be able to specify the hours the subsidy could apply.

[23] The LTMA does not allow services which are not part of a 'unit' to receive a subsidy. Councils are able, however, to provide funding assistance to passenger services for the purposes of reducing fares (as is done with Total Mobility). To do this they need to be an approved activity under Section 20 of the Act, which gives NZTA discretion on whether to approve funding. It is therefore uncertain whether this option would receive funding. WRC would have to apply for it and NZTA would assess the application against the LTMA.

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6 Assessment

The eight long-list options have been assessed at a high level, against the criteria in Table 6.1. The results of this assessment are set out in section 6.2. The purpose of this assessment is to identify short-list options for more detailed assessment in the next phase of work.

6.1 Assessment criteria

Options were assessed against eight assessment criteria, shown below in Table 6-1. These criteria are based on best-practice public transport planning considerations. Possible criteria that would not have resulted in differentiation of scoring were not included (such as potential environmental impacts, which was excluded as all vehicles are assumed to be electric, except in Option H which is outside of the Council's control).

Options were scored against each criteria on a five-point scale:

- **Poor** (does not meet criteria) – 1 point (coloured pink in the assessment)
- **Fair** (meets to a limited extent) – 2 points (coloured yellow)
- **Good** (adequate performance) – 3 points (coloured light green)
- **Very Good** (meets criteria well) – 4 points (coloured mid green)
- **Excellent** (exceeds criteria) – 5 points (coloured dark green)

Options can therefore score between a minimum of 8 and maximum of 40 points. The actual range of results is between 15 and 31 points.

Table 6-1: Assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria	Definition
Coverage and Accessibility	How well does the option serve key destinations, residential areas, and transport-disadvantaged groups?
Cost Efficiency	What is the expected cost per passenger, costs associated with supporting infrastructure, and overall value for money?
Patronage Potential	Is the option likely to attract sufficient users based on demand patterns?
Operational Complexity	How easy is the option to plan, operate, and communicate to users?
Customer Experience	Does the option offer convenience, reliability, and satisfaction?
Integration with Wider Network	How well does the option connect with Hamilton and other routes?
Scalability & Flexibility	Can the option adapt to future growth or changing demand?
Policy & Funding Alignment	Does the option fit with regional/national PT strategies and funding frameworks?

Source: Mott MacDonald

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6.2 Options assessment

Table 6-2: Options assessment

Option / Assessment Criteria	Supplementary service Option A	Comprehensive service Option B	Regional branch service Option C	Point-to-point on-demand Option D	Set destinations on-demand Option E	Call-off service Option F	Mixed service Option G	Subsidised services Option H
Coverage & Accessibility	3	4	2	5	4	4	4	5
	Good coverage of main Cambridge attractors / destinations but leaves gaps	High coverage of Cambridge urban area	Good coverage of main Cambridge attractors / destinations but more gaps than supplementary service	Highest level of coverage and accessibility	Some restriction on possible destinations	Hybrid nature gives improved coverage compared to traditional fixed routes	Hybrid nature gives improved coverage compared to traditional fixed routes during off-peak	Highest level of coverage and accessibility
Cost Efficiency	4	3	5	2	3	1	4	1
	Cost should be straightforward to establish and fairly standard to operate. Some cost for new bus stops	Additional coverage comes with higher cost. Some cost for new bus stops	Likely the most cost-efficient model based on existing and future demand. Some cost for new bus stops	Likely to have high operating costs compared to fixed-route services	Slightly more efficient given restriction on destinations - likely to result in more ride sharing	Call-off nature means costs are higher than fixed service and must be baked in to account for potential call-off which may not be realised	More cost efficient to provide fixed-route service and peak and on-demand off peak (particularly if using set-destination model)	Very hard to establish costs and no way to control these
Patronage Potential	3	2	4	3	4	2	5	3
	Likely to generate modest patronage	May be too much service for a town of Cambridge's size (low patronage relative to cost)	Serving the corridors with highest patronage potential and more stable demand, supporting regular use.	Less efficient than set-destination services but may generate modest patronage	Higher percentage of shared ride means same fleet can serve more trips compared to point-to-point service. High coverage maximises usefulness to customers	Unreliable journey times likely to discourage passengers from using the service	Most efficient way to maximise both peak and off-peak patronage	Uncertain, but possible to get medium uptake
Operational Complexity	4	3	4	3	4	2	3	1
	Simple with established timetables and routes that are easier to communicate and manage.	More complex to operate multiple routes with a timed transfer to the regional service	Simple with established timetables and routes that are easier to communicate and manage.	Requires back-end system to schedule trips. Point-to-point nature more complex than set destination	Requires back-end system to schedule trips. Set destinations less complex than point-to-point	Hard to account for call-off feature in planning and customer communications	Slightly more complex that either fixed-route or on-demand. May require a 'transition' period between service types	Would require a greater level of resource to oversee eligibility and manage costs
Customer Experience	3	3	4	3	4	1	4	3
	Predictable and consistent experience, though with less flexibility for users.	Predictable and consistent experience, though with less flexibility for users.	Predictable and consistent experience, though with less flexibility for users. Scored higher given it does not require a transfer to reach Hamilton	Very flexible, however, high demand could limit the ability of trips to be fulfilled within an acceptable wait time	Assuming appropriate destinations possible, this is a good balance between flexibility and waiting times	Very poor experience for customers, not knowing how long their trip will take	Some inconvenience for customers beyond the fixed-route service at peak, but otherwise a good balance of predictability and flexibility	Hassles involving providing eligibility, unsure of cost of fare, availability may be limited during high demand periods. Good experience for those familiar with the system
Integration with Wider Network	4	4	5	2	3	2	3	1
	Can be timed to connect to regional service, but would require a second transfer for trips within Hamilton not on Route 20	Can be timed to connect to regional service, but would require a second transfer for trips within Hamilton not on Route 20	Well integrated with existing service to Hamilton, only one transfer required to other Hamilton destinations	Can provide some level of connection to Route 20, but on-demand nature makes this harder to achieve	If a key Route 20 stop is a set destination, this option caters better than the point-to-point model	Call-off nature risks potential for missing connection to route 20, or otherwise imposing a long transfer buffer on customers	Peak time trips can provide a timed connection (but still a second transfer onwards in Hamilton), off-peak connection is less prefered	Not well-integrated (e.g., no Beecard transfer)
Scalability & Flexibility	3	4	3	1	2	1	4	1
	Frequencies can be increased and the route can be amended as demand growths, however this will require communicating changes and changes to service contract	Comprehensive nature means that as the town grows new residents can make use of the services	Frequencies can be increased and the branch route can be extended as demand growths, however this will require communicating changes and changes to service contract	Very hard to scale up without significantly increasing costs - no economies of scale possible	Slightly more efficient given restriction on destinations, but still hard to get economies of scale	Increased call-off will make the route less useful for passengers	Flexbile during periods of highest demand. Can change fixed/on-demand hours to adjust to changing demand patterns if required	No way to scale, and fully dependant on private operators
Policy & Funding Alignment	4	3	4	3	3	2	2	1
	Well-established in policy and funding, with clear frameworks for operation and support.	Well-established in policy, but utilisation may not support operating multiple routes initially	Well-established in policy and funding, with clear frameworks for operation and support.	Flexible services already operate in the Waikato Region and are able to be funded	Flexible services already operate in the Waikato Region and are able to be funded	This type of service does not currently operate in New Zealand	This type of service does not currently operate in New Zealand	Very low alignment, may not be considered as public transport
Total Score	**28**	**26**	**31**	**22**	**27**	**15**	**29**	**16**

Source: Mott MacDonald

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7 Shortlisted options

Based on the assessment in section 6.2, the four highest-scoring options have been selected to progress to the short-list. These are, from highest- to lowest-scoring:

1. **Option C** – Regional branch service (31 points)
2. **Option G** – Mixed service (29 points)
3. **Option A** – Supplementary local service (28 points)
4. **Option E** – Set-destination on-demand (27 points)

This short-list provides a range of distinct service concepts to be developed in more detail. Each approach represents a different way services might appropriately be provided for Cambridge.

Considerations of these options will include an assessment of their distinct strengths and weaknesses relative to each other. This further consideration will also include an assessment of the potential operating costs of the services and how much patronage they might generate.

Further consideration of the short-list will occur in the next phase of work and will be outlined in Technical Report 2.

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8 Next steps

The next phase of this work, Technical Report 2, focuses on refinement of the short-list options and identification of a preferred option for implementation. This includes:

- High-level costing of the short-list options.
- Estimates of potential patronage of the short-list options.
- Consideration of the relative strengths and weaknesses across the options.

The preferred option was refined to include detailed service parameters, including operating hours, frequency, coverage, potential stop locations, and relationship to other services (such as the existing route 20). A patronage forecast, indicative operational and capital costs for the preferred option are also included.

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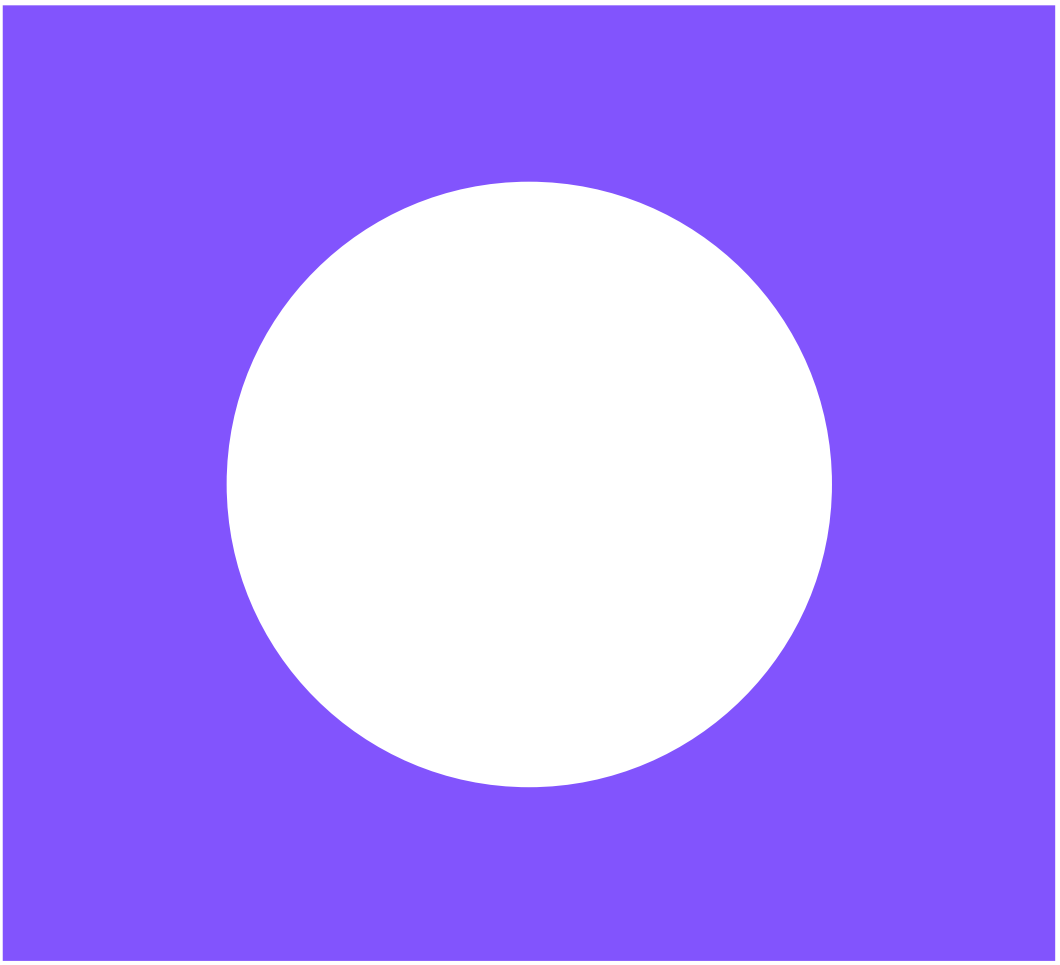

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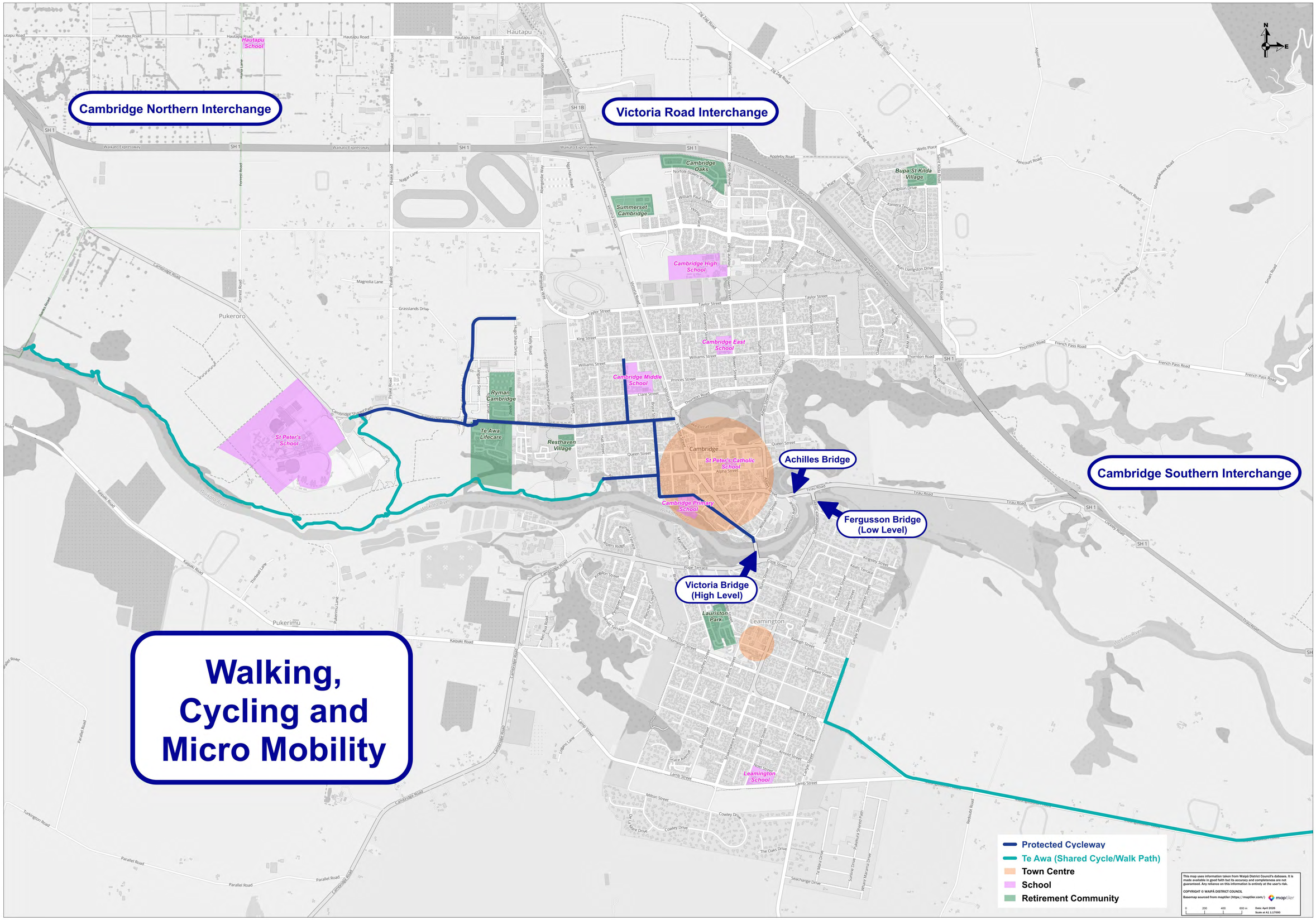
APPENDIX 2

Walking, cycling & micromobility map (ECM 11671617)


Cambridge Northern Interchange
Victoria Road Interchange
Achilles Bridge
Fergusson Bridge
(Low Level)
Victoria Bridge
(High Level)
Cambridge Southern Interchange
Walking,
Cycling and
Micro Mobility
Hautapu School
Cambridge Oaks
Summerset Cambridge
Bupa St Kilda Village
Cambridge High School
Cambridge East School
Cambridge Middle School
Ryman Cambridge
Te Awa Lifecare
Resthaven Village
St Peter's School
St Peter's Catholic School
Cambridge Primary School
Lauriston Park
Leamington School
Pukeroro
Pukerimu
Leamington
Cambridge
Waikato River
Protected Cycleway
Te Awa (Shared Cycle/Walk Path)
Town Centre
School
Retirement Community
This map uses information taken from Waipā District Council's databases. It is made available in good faith but its accuracy and completeness are not guaranteed. Any reliance on this information is entirely at the user's risk.
COPYRIGHT © WAIPĀ DISTRICT COUNCIL
Basemap sourced from maptiler (https://maptiler.com/)
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APPENDIX 3

Walking, cycling & micromobility powerpoint (ECM 11670016

Cambridge connections

Moving forward together

Community Reference Group
Cycling, Walking & Micromobility
5 May 2026

Waipā DISTRICT COUNCIL

Document Set ID: 11670016
Version: 10, Version Date: 22/04/2026

Purpose

To inform the Community Reference Group on our Urban Mobility Business Case objectives and programme

To seek feedback from the group on key urban mobility priorities for the development of options for Cambridge Connections

Waipā DISTRICT COUNCIL

Urban Mobility business case 2021

- Transition towards a transport model that favours walking and cycling
- For walking it proposes a network-based approach to improving existing facilities, in particular the crossing points on key routes on busy streets
- For cycling it proposes to develop a network of key routes. The infrastructure proposed will be designed for the safe and easy use of people of all ages and abilities.

Urban Mobility business case 2021

- For bus users it proposed to ensure that we provide the necessary connectivity and infrastructure to facilitate how bus users incorporate walking or cycling into their journey.
- Expansion of key routes to include well frequented key destinations to maximise the benefits to the community early
- Investment corridors chosen to consolidate investment

Waipā DISTRICT COUNCIL

Progress to date

Project	Year completed	Funding source
Hamilton Road cycleway	2022	NZTA low cost low risk (51% NZTA 49% local share)
Cambridge Road Urbanisation	2024	Growth
Cambridge Pathway	2025	NZTA Transport Choices (approx. 66% NZTA 33% local share)
C2/C3 roundabout and C2 growth cell	2025	Growth

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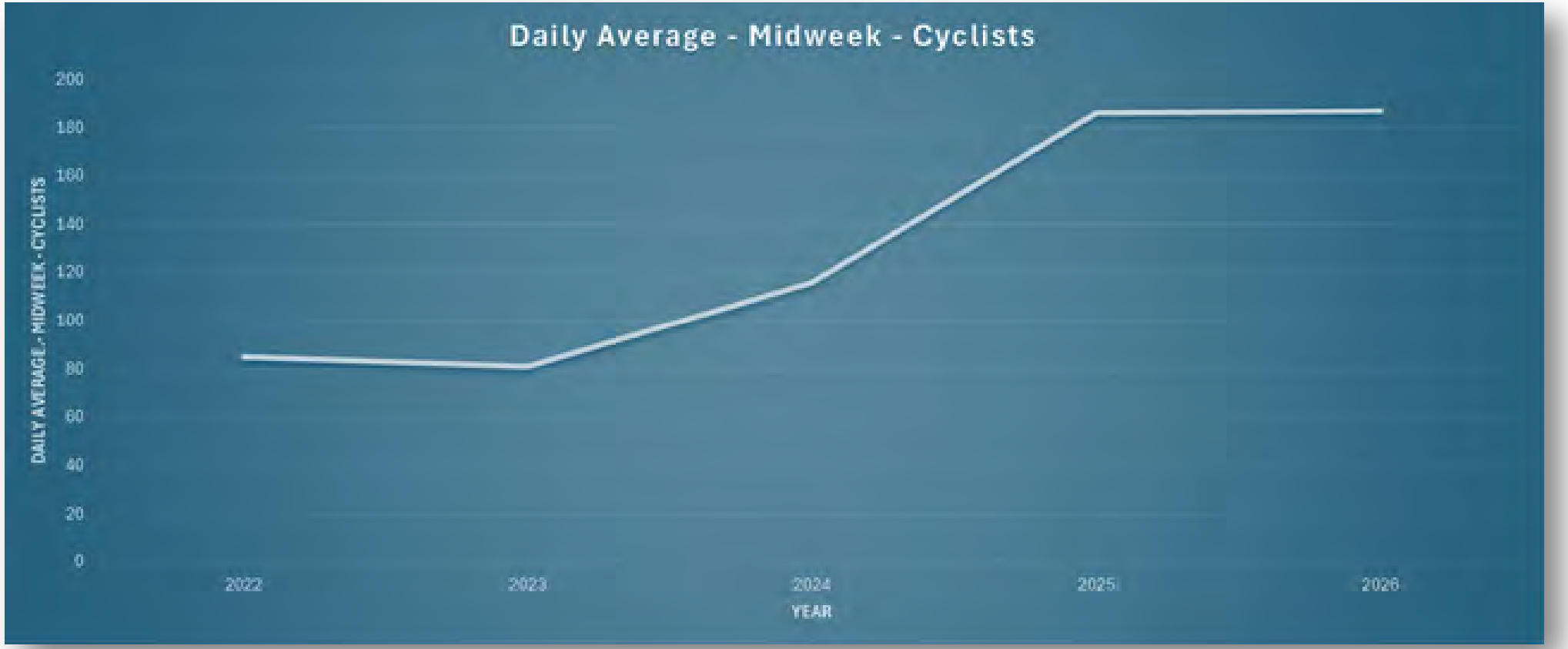
Cycle count data

Source: Count station on Hamilton Road



Community transport ideas

- *Secure bike parking*
- *e-bike charging facilities*
- *bike share schemes*
- *safer crossings outside key destinations*
- *expand walking and cycling infrastructure*
- *improve kerb ramps for pedestrians & mobility users*
- *expand footpaths/safe cycling facilities on rural edges*
- *safer cycle/walking facilities across the river*
- *design for accessibility for elderly and mobility users*
- *safe connected school active transport routes*
- *expand cycleways and pedestrian crossings in Leamington*
- *bikes on bells for cyclists*
- *cycle/walking paths connections to new growth areas*
- *green verges for cycleways*
- *extend Te Awa cycleway network*
- *prohibit bikes/e-scooters in town*
- *widen footpath network*
- *improve Victoria Street pavers*
- *traffic calming and speed limits*
- *improve shared path safety*
- *bike parking at bus stops*
- *allow kids to bike on footpaths*

Waipā DISTRICT COUNCIL

Key questions

1. What should be the next priorities for the urban mobility network?

- *Connections to schools?*
- *Connections to retirement villages?*
- *Leamington connection into the CBD*
- *Other?*

Waipā DISTRICT COUNCIL

Key questions …

2. What other ideas do you have to support walking & cycling in Cambridge now and for the future?

- *Cycle parking?*
- *Improved pedestrian crossings*
- *Bike skills training?*
- *Promotional events?*
- *Cycle tourism? (Te Awa River Ride)*
- *Bike hire schemes?*

Waipā DISTRICT COUNCIL

APPENDIX 4

Future transport (NZTA) (ECM 11638484)

What could transport look like in the future – and what could that mean for Cambridge?

Prepared for Waipā District Council

NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
WAKA KOTAHI

Document Set ID: 11638484
Version: 1, Version Date: 04/03/2026

Context

Understanding the local and regional context so that we can better understand how technology can enable the future transport system the community aspires to.

Cambridge is growing fast: 3% annual population growth and one of the fastest growing towns in NZ, now home to 22,400 people, with a strong lifestyle identity and increasing diversity.

Demographics: Ageing population drives demand for accessible, safe infrastructure and off-peak travel options. Māori make up 11% of residents.

Land use pressures: Greenfield growth and housing expansion particularly in the next ten years in the north. Business growth in Hautapu and surrounding Hamilton Airport.

Geography & environment: Flat topography; surrounded by highly productive soils and bisected by culturally significant Waikato River

Travel patterns: 40% of people live and work in Cambridge, 13% travel to Hamilton for work. Over half of all car trips are short (≤6km), low PT use (0.5%), but high potential for mode shift due to compact, flat geography.

Travel modelling: Majority of road network forecast to have a good level of service but areas of increased traffic and congestion at Hautapu interchange and on the main roads e.g. Cambridge Road, Victoria Street/Road, Peake Road).

Safety: Serious injuries on key streets; bicycles feature in many incidents, particularly in central Cambridge.

Transport vision from district and local plans: A shift from car dependency to frequent, fast public transport, and safe walking and cycling, especially around schools, parks, and the town centre

Local priorities: Better PT links to Hamilton and Te Awamutu, safer active travel routes, and managing traffic to protect Cambridge's family-friendly character.

Document Set ID: 11638484
Version: 1, Version Date: 04/03/2026

Looking back to look forward

New Zealand's transport system has undergone significant transformation in the last 30 years

More people and increased urbanisation

- More people using the transport system resulted in more traffic, congestion and competition for space
- More freight carried by road, i.e. a lot more trucks sharing the road, increased delivery vans in towns – safety risks and damage to roads
- Rapid urban sprawl, particularly on rural margins of towns and cities with people living further away from where they want to go along with inadequate (or no) public transport services

Economic changes

- The distance that heavy goods and light passenger vehicles travel followed changes in economic activity.
- Growth in manufacturing and services sectors has meant more activity in urban areas
- Household transport costs have increased from 10% in the late fifties to 18%.
- Fuel and cheap imported cars drove up the rate of car ownership to one of the highest in the world.
- Covid resulted in rapid change to the economy including a large increase in remote working, use of online shopping and a sharp increase in living costs including petrol.

Governance changes

- Transfer of the operations and ownership of ports, rail, and public transport from central government to private enterprise, SoEs, and council organisations made the system more complex.
- A period of underinvestment in maintenance and renewals of infrastructure and services.

Changing travel behaviour and expectations

- We travel a lot more and the ever increasing desire to reach individual destinations has dramatically increased travel demand
- The convenience and availability of private vehicles has had probably the most profound impact on the way we travel. Most trips in a car are short, between 3 – 6km.
- Public transport usage and service less available despite a growing population. Less cycling and walking rates with perception of safety a major barrier.
- The rate of deaths and serious injuries on our roads rose sharply and despite best efforts have remained stubbornly high – speed and inattention are major causes.

Environmental awareness

- Increased understanding of the environmental impact of the transport system and a growing public desire to do something about it including:
  - Evidence of the impact of air and water pollution
  - Greenhouse gas emissions and the link to a warming climate with transport contributing 19% of the country's gross greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

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Looking back to look forward

Technological advancements over the past 30 years have gradually, but quite radically, shifted the way we plan, pay and think about our travel, particularly in urban areas. They have been able to offer you new choices about the way you travel and create new efficiencies in the system.

Technological changes over the last three decades include:

1. **Planning a journey got a lot easier**
2. **The transport system got safer**
3. **Tech got smart**
4. **We got more electrified**
5. **We invented new ways to get around**

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Version: 1, Version Date: 04/03/2026

1

Planning a journey got a lot easier

Technology has dramatically transformed how people plan their travel over the last 30 years, making it **faster, more personalised, and more efficient**

- GPS navigation evolved from standalone units (e.g. Navman) to on your phone (map apps) and built into modern vehicles.
- Real-time traffic updates and ability to figure out and change routes.

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2

Transport system got safer

Innovations in vehicle design, digital systems, infrastructure, and data analytics has made driving a lot safer.

Vehicles:

- electronic stability control – introduced in the mid-1990s, helps prevent skidding and loss of control by automatically applying brakes to individual wheels.
- rearview cameras – to assist with reversing and parking
- lane departure warning – to warn drivers if they unintentionally drift out of their lane.
- automatic emergency braking

- Speed limit information on car display units and roadside digital displays
- Red light cameras
- Rumble strips and wire rope barriers

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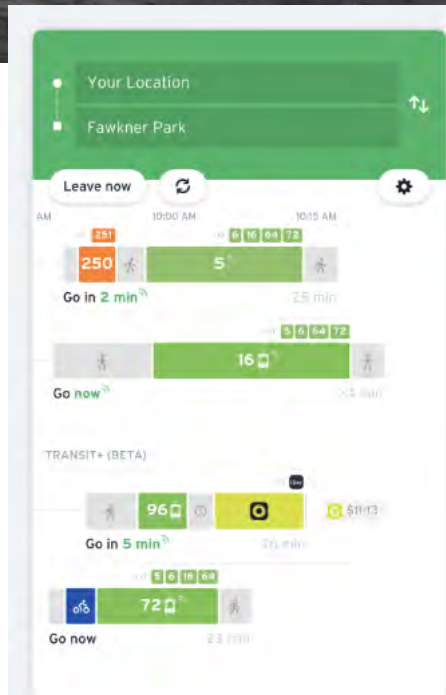
3 Tech got smart

Electronics, sensors, and communication networks give us more information and mean we can do things faster.

- Park-and-ride facilities enhanced by dynamic signs to inform drivers of space availability
- Introduction of cashless payments for parking and public transport
- Integrated ticketing systems like the Bee card or ATHOP in Auckland
- Real-time tracking of buses and trains has improved reliability and user experience.
- Real time traffic monitoring
- Adaptive traffic light signalling – traffic lights are timed to work in real time based on actual traffic conditions
- Number plate recognition systems used for tolling and parking enforcement
- Mobile phone Apps mean we can quickly organise rides and meal deliveries



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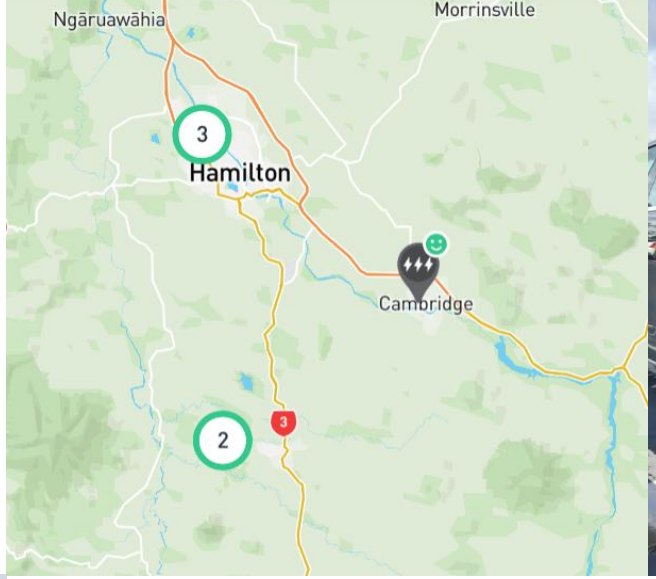
4

We got more electrified



A steady increase in the electrification of the fleet has occurred as the technology has become more reliable and affordable, playing an important role in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.

- A growing fleet of electric/hybrid private vehicles
- Electric machinery at ports and freight hubs
- Rail upgrades in Wellington and Auckland have focused on electrification
- Expanding charging infrastructure across NZ
- Electric heavy vehicles including electric buses and trucks are starting to be used

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5

We invented new ways to get around

Micromobility and shared transport has widened options for travel.

- The term ‘micromobility’ refers to small, up to two-person transport options for short journeys personified by the creation of e-scooters, e-bikes and segways
- Early shared systems (bicycles) started in Europe in the late nineties
- App-based e-scooter and e-bike sharing (Lime etc) arrived in NZ in the 2010s
- App-based ride-hailing services like Uber arrived in NZ eight years after its creation, in the mid 2010s

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Emerging technologies shaping land transport

Rapid changes in technology will change transport in New Zealand

New mobility including a wide selection of micro vehicles

Smart and connected transport systems

Vehicles and infrastructure communicating with each other

More electric vehicles that are automated

including self driving personal, public transport and freight vehicles

Aerial vehicles including delivery drones and air taxis

Changing infrastructure
Innovative materials and methods, smart sensors to monitor and manage assets, inductive charging

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What about Cambridge?

Technology being used in other places in NZ will turn up in Cambridge too….

- Electronic parking systems
  - App based parking
  - Parking enforcement using camera technology
- PT electronic message boards or App based live PT departures
- Bus priority systems using GPS tracking
- On-demand public transport (e.g. being trialled in Timaru)
- Shared scooters and e-bikes (e.g. Lime, Flamingo, Beam and Ario)
- Cargo e-bikes for local deliveries
- Shared vehicle schemes (e.g. CityHop, Mevo and Zilch) operating in large urban areas
- New ways of managing assets (e.g. remote controlled mowers, drones for surveying)

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How can technology help achieve the aspirations you have for your town?

The following slides look at a selection of issues/opportunities and examples the role of technology could play in each.

1. Improving the lives of older people
2. Improving safety of the local transport system
3. Improving the urban environment
4. Maximising the benefit of major events

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Improving the lives of older residents

Overall, more Cambridge residents will be older, some with limited ability to drive, but near some services and opportunities.

Short term / available now in NZ or elsewhere

- Cars with advanced driving assistance will be safer for those with lower levels of driving skills
- Electric micromobility is increasingly available, including e-bikes, which will enable those who don't have licences and live in urban environments to use the cycle path network to get around

Medium term (~5years)

- Self driving mobility scooters and wheelchairs are likely to emerge. These can increase options for older residents in urban areas who may no longer be able to safely operate a conventional micro-vehicle
- Self driving shuttles can provide a low-cost public transport network, potentially point-to-point
  - Low flat floors make it easier for people with limited mobility.
  - Can be deployed on peak routes and used to provide services between aged accommodation and health, shopping and leisure destinations in off-peak periods (perhaps with a host to support people with restricted mobility or nervous about the absence of a driver)
- Self driving delivery services (whether on-road or footpath robots) can deliver shopping and meals efficiently and cheaply, potentially enabling elderly to live independently for longer.

Long term (~10 plus years)

- Self driving vehicles will become available for private buyers, which will enable higher income people who can no longer drive to remain living independently for longer

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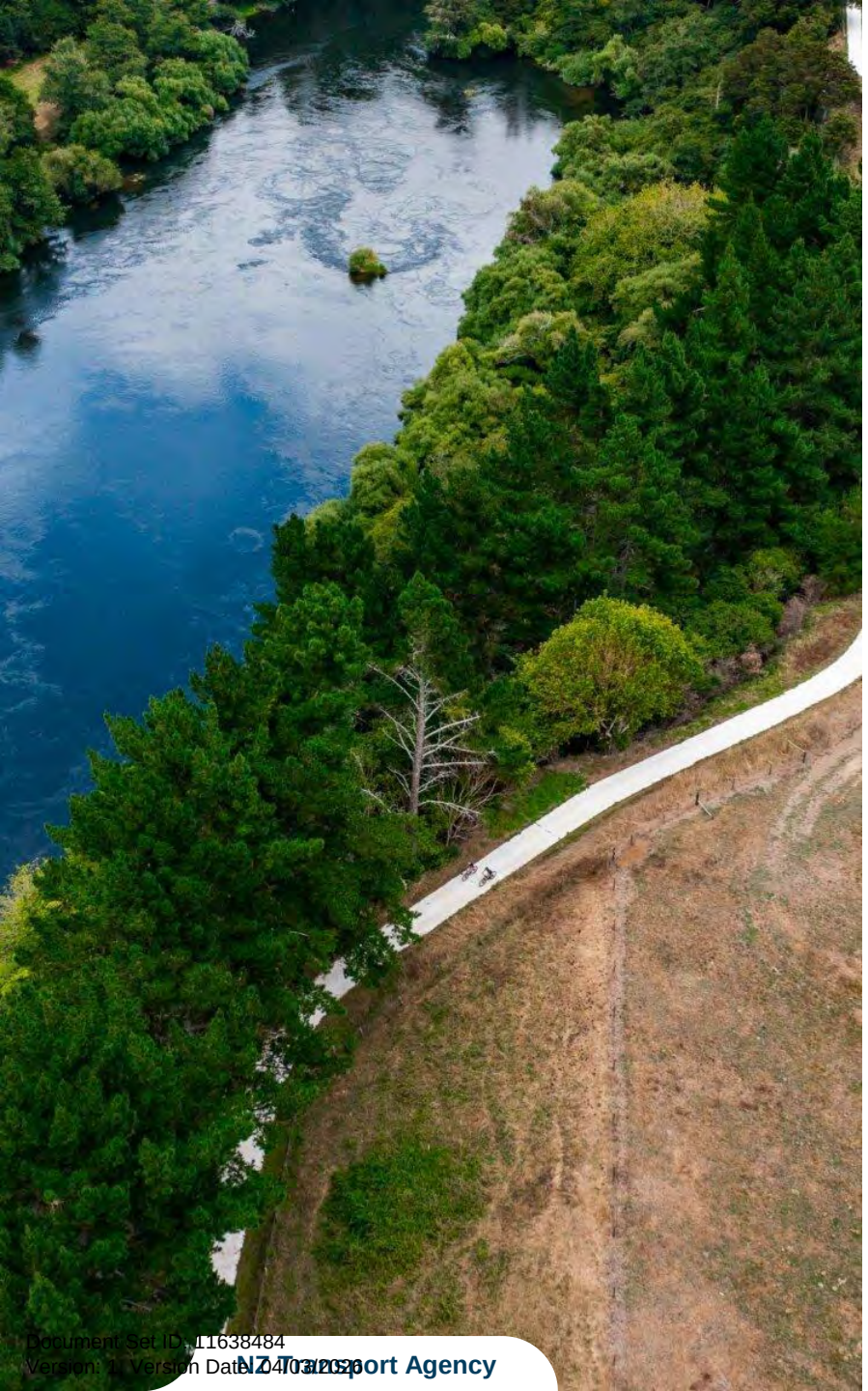

Improving safety of the local transport system

Technology has a big role to play in keeping people in Cambridge and surrounding rural roads safe, particularly if you want to encourage more walking and cycling.

Short term / available now in NZ or elsewhere

- Growing use of increasingly advanced driver assistance systems in vehicles reduces the likelihood they will be involved in an accident
- Illuminated markers and lines at rural intersections can provide greater visibility of intersections at night, reducing the likelihood of accidents

Medium term (~5years)

- Smart infrastructure can be used to provide information directly to vehicles (or potentially mobile phones) so drivers are warned early about road hazards
- Pricing or other mechanisms should become available to enable specific vehicle types to be restricted from some parts of the network (eg heavy vehicles from CBD, urban or vulnerable user areas)
- Commercial / PT vehicles will be increasingly autonomous, removing driver safety risk

Long term (~10 plus years)

- Autonomous vehicles will become available for private buyers, which have a lower risk of accident than human-driven vehicles

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Improving the urban environment

Technology helps to make space for lots of different ways for people and goods to move around, even in ways we don't know about yet.

Short term / available now in NZ or elsewhere

- Increasing micromobility (for people and freight) could reduce the number of vehicles on the roads, reducing congestion and emissions
- Increased connectivity of heavy vehicles using electronic RUC will enable data collection about their movements to support network operation and planning
- Ready availability smart cameras can enable detailed understanding of use of all parts the network (roads, cycleways, parking) to support planning and management of the network
- Apps or electronically-monitored parking spaces can deliver sophisticated parking solutions with different rates charged for different durations of stay (e.g escalating or decreasing hourly rates) targeting desired use while eliminating risk to users of being charged parking penalties
- Introduction of PT will reduce number of private vehicles on the road and parked in urban areas
- PT can be "electric first" so that the introduction of these new vehicle types onto the network will have no negative impact on air quality and minimum impact on noise

Medium term (~5years)

- Greater electrification of all vehicle types will reduce harmful emissions
- Apps on phones or navigation systems in vehicles could identify optimum routes and parking availability, which would reduce congestion
- More vehicles will be able to park automatically so they will move quickly and efficiently into kerbside parking spaces, reducing "Main St" congestion caused by traffic queueing behind drivers parking

Long term (~10 plus years)

- The vehicle fleet will eventually be fully electric
- Emergence of non-road transport options – air taxis and drones – will reduce traffic but potentially create demand for other connectivity

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Maximising the benefit of major events

Building on Cambridge's reputation and economic strengths.

Short term / available now in NZ or elsewhere

- Data collected using cheap cameras combined with AI can build up a picture of traffic patterns around major events, facilitating learnings or even real-time traffic management
- PT vehicles may be able to be used off-peak to provide shuttle services to major events – improving visitor experience, reducing traffic congestion and potentially being based alongside other local attractions to deliver wider economic benefit

Medium term (~5years)

- Increasing levels of vehicle connectivity and navigation systems will result in vehicles optimising a range of routes to reach major events
- Vehicle connectivity may create options for information to be sent to vehicle occupants about local retail and food options to combine with their major event visit

Long term (~10 plus years)

- Air taxis may be able to be used as shuttles to major events – creating similar benefits and opportunities to the use of PT above

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Supporting information

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Examples

Examples from across the world of approaches to the opportunities of technology in smaller districts

1**. Mount Barker District Council**

Technology and Innovation Action Plan

Ensuring the council is best placed to cater for future transport technologies.

2. **Spokane Regional Transportation Council**

Smart Mobility Plan

Understanding the impacts of emerging technologies in the region and developing a set of strategies and actions to advance transportation innovation.

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APPENDIX 5

PT Pathways brochure (ECM 11673963)

Waikato Regional Council
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

Future Proof
Te Tau Tītoki

Metro Spatial Plan Public Transport Pathway

Document Set ID: 11673963
Version: 1, Version Date: 28/04/2026

Public transport for a growing metro area

Hamilton and the surrounding towns are changing and growing rapidly. The population is expected to increase by a third in the next 30 years, which will mean more houses and more people needing to move around.

Without investment in quality public transport, people will find it increasingly difficult to get to jobs, schools, shops and other opportunities. People will either spend longer sitting in traffic or avoid travelling, constraining access, economic growth and productivity.

Better public transport is a critical enabler of good urban growth. Fast, direct and frequent buses provide more transport options, which means everyone can easily get to where they need to go without needing to drive, and fewer cars on the road.

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A transformational pathway

We've developed a staged pathway for transforming the metro area's public transport to support population and economic growth from 2027 to 2039. This includes Hamilton and the surrounding towns of Huntly, Ngaaruawaahia, Matamata, Cambridge and Te Awamutu.

The pathway takes the metro area closer to our established vision of a multi-modal transport system underpinned by frequent public transport. It works towards longer term development of a rapid transit network on major Hamilton transport corridors.

The pathway is central to our strategy for managing growth, both in existing and new development areas. It supports government strategic priorities for transport and helps clarify future funding needs.

Building on success

People flock to public transport when it is reliable, frequent, direct and fast. We've seen that with the upgraded Orbiter, Meteor, Cambridge and Te Awamutu services. As an example, the Meteor replaced two previous bus routes with a more frequent service operating for longer hours in 2023. Patronage almost doubled in less than a year, from around 5,000 to more than 9,000 trips per week.

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What to expect

New network: The metro area's current bus network has few routes that operate with good frequency. Many are also indirect and slow, and key destinations are difficult to get to. Most routes will change to address these problems.

Bus hubs: New and improved bus hubs will provide a more comfortable waiting experience at the busiest bus stops and places where people transfer between services.

Bus priority: Priority lanes and other improvements that prioritise buses will make public transport a fast travel option as the population grows and traffic increases.

Metro area services: Recent improvements to Cambridge and Te Awamutu services have seen big increases in patronage. These improvements will continue for all towns in the metro area.

Better public transport to more places, more often

- More frequent routes to turn up and go.
- Better links to key destinations.
- High-quality services into growing areas.
- Better waiting facilities.
- More bus priority for quicker, reliable journeys.
- More travel options.

How we got here

This plan has been developed by the Future Proof partnership to support growth within the metro area and involved input from Councils, NZTA and other partner organisations. Successful approaches from other New Zealand cities have also informed development of the plan.

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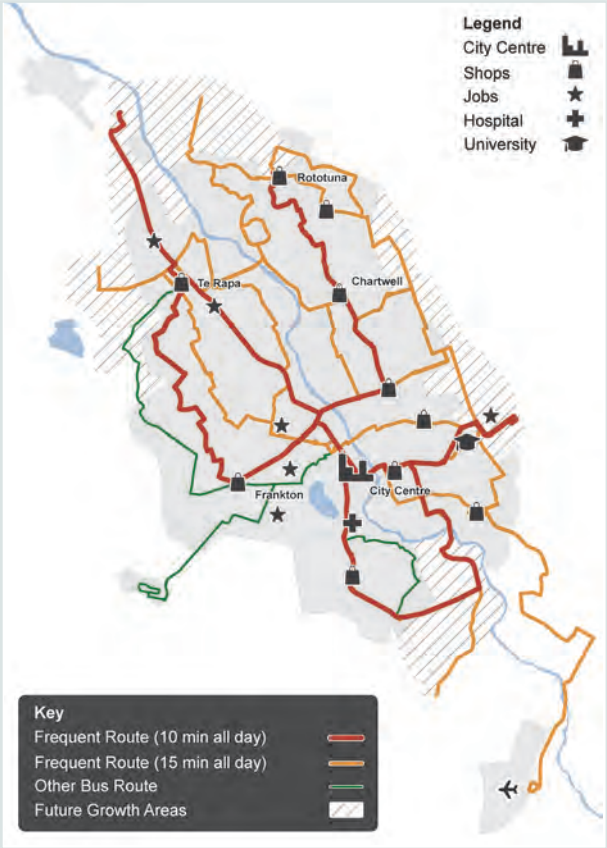
New network



The refreshed bus network will have three main routes running at 10-minute frequencies all day. These will build on the existing Comet and Meteor routes and add a new route linking Rototuna, the city centre and Peacocke. They will become rapid transit in the longer term.

New frequent routes running at 15-minute frequencies all day will complement the main routes in Hamilton. From three frequent routes today, there will be nine by 2030, and 15 by 2039, covering most parts of the city. Other routes will ensure most urban areas remain within an easy walk of a bus stop.

All routes will be more direct, meaning faster trips to key destinations. There will be more services not just to the city centre, but to other key centres and new growth areas.

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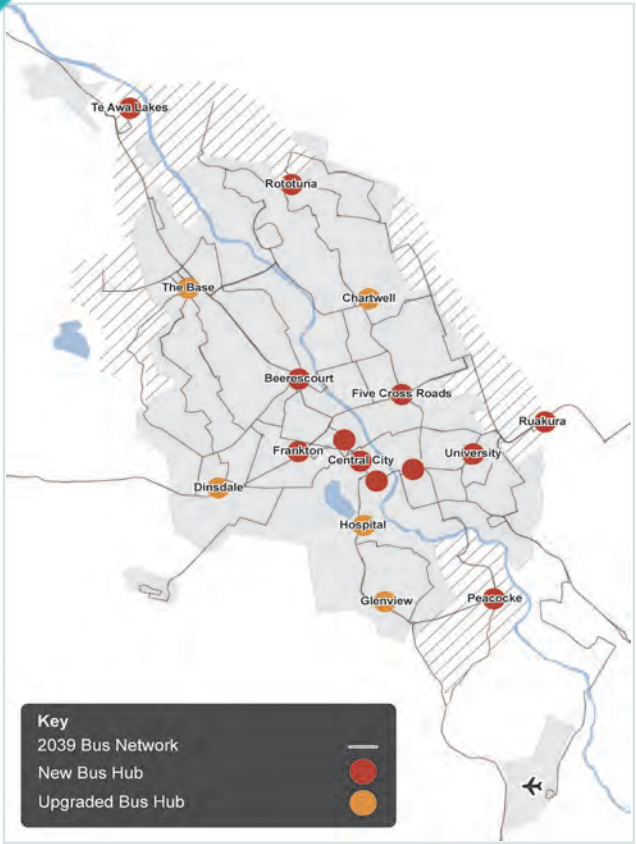
Bus hubs



Eighteen bus hubs are planned (12 new and 6 improved). These will provide high-quality places to wait for the bus at key locations, with features like large shelters, good lighting and real-time information on how long to wait for the next bus.

They will be built to enable easy connections between services. Connections will be simple as frequencies become higher, meaning less time waiting for buses.

Anglesea Street will have three hubs along its length in the city centre. The central hub will connect with services at the existing transport centre.

Some suburban hubs will meet operational needs by providing facilities for drivers and space for buses to turn around and wait.

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Bus priority

Bus priority will speed up buses and make services faster, more convenient and efficient. This includes new bus lanes (used by buses only), transit lanes (used by buses and cars with two or more people) and intersection priority (letting the bus go first at intersections).

Bus priority will make better use of existing street infrastructure and be targeted to locations where there are high volumes of buses and passengers and where traffic congestion causes delay. It will form the basis of the future rapid transit network in the longer term.

In the first phase from 2027 to 2030, bus priority is proposed for Anglesea Street, Clyde Street, Peachgrove Road and Hukanui Road. Priority measures on other corridors are planned for later.

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Metro towns

Bus services to Huntly, Ngaaruawaahia, Morrinsville, Cambridge and Te Awamutu will improve over time to be more frequent and available later into the evening, seven days a week. It is proposed that weekday daytime frequencies will reach 20 minutes (three an hour) by 2039.

As service levels increase, the routes will be split within each town, with alternate services to different areas, providing better access locally and to Hamilton, which will support growth.

These services will stop only at key destinations within Hamilton to enable access and transfer. This will make bus journeys quicker and more attractive.

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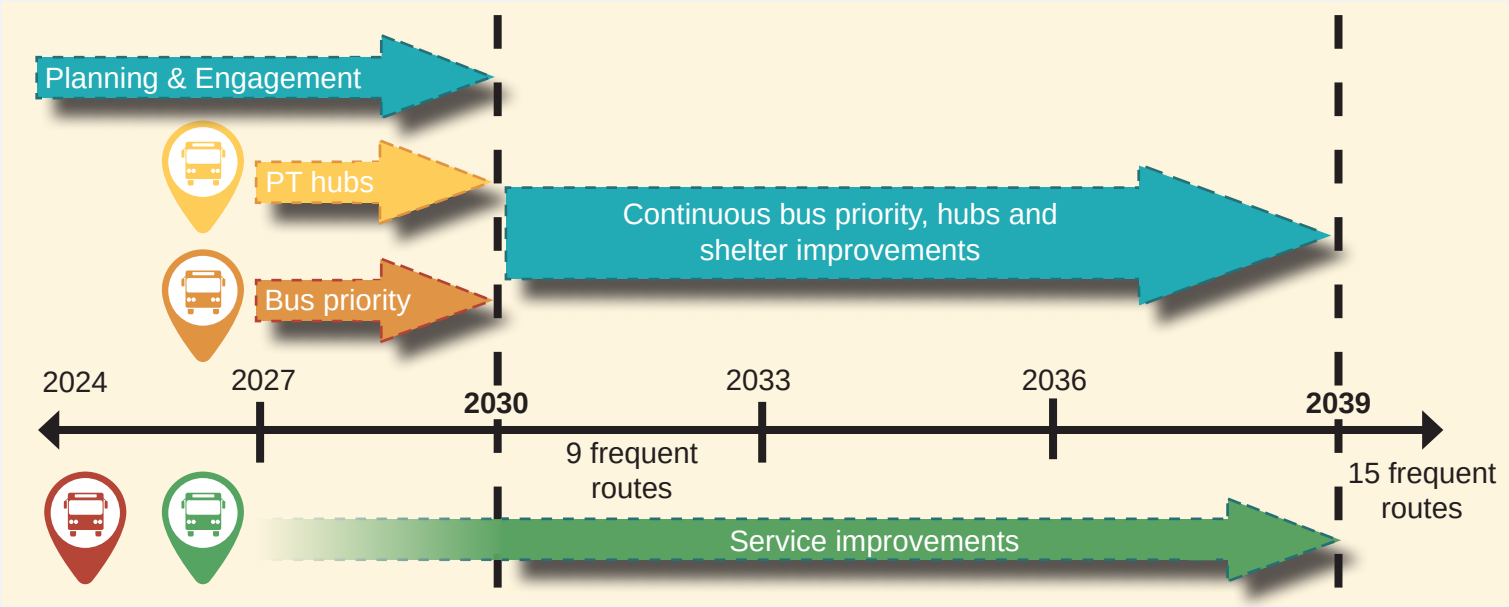
Next steps

The timeline below summarises how we propose to deliver the pathway. This shows that changes are planned to start from 2027, with an initial round of improvements being completed by 2030 and further upgrades through to 2039, subject to funding.

We have more detailed planning and design work ahead, and the community will have the opportunity to contribute when we consult on the next Regional Public Transport Plan and each council's Long Term Plan.



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Waikato
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

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