

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

Buses in central Wellington are being subject to increasingly levels of delay and travel time variability due to rising volumes of general traffic and the number of bus vehicles operating through the area. Bus travel between Courtenay Place and the Railway Station, a journey timetabled as 10 – 15 minutes, may take up to 28 minutes in the evening peak period.

Uncertainty with respect to the arrival time of a bus service is cited by bus passengers as an important issue, and one which acts against the general objective of both city and regional councils to increase the patronage of public transport services.

Current initiatives to improve the reliability of bus service times are concentrated in areas on the edge of the central area, for example the Hutt Road and Chaytor Street, where there is little inconvenience to other road users and costs are low due to the availability of space. In contrast, bus priority measures in the critical central areas have generally not met funding requirements due to low or negative net benefits (when additional congestion to other road users is evaluated) and the lack of space for the provision of separate running lanes for buses.

A critical review of the operation of bus network in the central area has identified two isolated improvements, in the Hunter and Mercer Street areas, which would lead to some reductions in delays experienced by buses. Analysis has shown that these are feasible from both engineering and economic perspectives.

In the central area there is little scope for further measures which would have any significant impact on the movement of buses. More radical proposals to free the CBD area of extraneous traffic have not been advanced because of a fear of an adverse reaction from the public and the retail sector. It is now appropriate to determine the importance the community places upon accessibility for the private car to the central area, public transport services, pedestrian accessibility and levels of environmental amenity in order to give a mandate for change.

### 6.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that;

- the Lambton Quay / Featherston Street / Hunter Street improvement which has been evaluated should proceed to detailed design and implementation
- the Willis Street / Mercer Street improvement which has been evaluated should proceed to detailed design, subject to an assessment of the potential benefits arising from the application of localised bus pre-emption in this area

- the proposal for a southbound median bus lane on Thorndon Quay, identified in the **BAH** report, should now be investigated further in the light of more certainty with respect to the bus terminus layout and the movement of the **Newlands/Mana** buses
- the separate benefits associated with the provision of a separate bus phase at the Cuba Street pedestrian crossing on Dixon Street should be identified to determine if this project is worthwhile on its own
- the use of localised bus pre-emption on the Golden Mile using inductive loops should be investigated as a short term measure
- the introduction of full bus pre-emption on the Golden Mile using transponders fitted to buses should be taken forward to more detailed evaluation
- the available traffic modelling tools should be used to assess opportunities for the removal of extraneous traffic from the central area between **Courtenay Place** and **Lambton Quay** (co-ordinate with the 'aggressive' public transport scenarios to be evaluated as part of the current Wellington CBD Corridor Study)
- the criteria which are implicitly used to set traffic signal timings and which hence determine relative priorities within the **CBD** area should be reviewed and alternatives evaluated
- the costs and benefits associated with northbound bus running from the **Courtenay Place / Taranaki Street** intersection through Manners Mall should be assessed
- opportunities for a reduction in the number of bus vehicles running through the central area (whilst maintaining capacity) should be reviewed with bus operators
- a greater emphasis should be placed upon the 'intangible' benefits of bus priority projects; this will require work to identify and evaluate such benefits
- **WCC** and **WRC** should work more closely together to ensure the achievement of improved operating conditions for public transport; this may require a review of the current 'Quality Partnership Agreement' arrangement.