

Johnsonville Community Association Submission to LGWM MRT & Basin Exchange Project

10 December 2021

Tony Randle, President of the JCA

Suburb: Johnsonville

What do you like about these options?

Is there an option you like the most? Why? Is there something that you really want for Wellington in any of these options?

The Johnsonville Community Association (JCA) met and agreed that Option 2 BRT is preferred over the other three proposed options as it has the preferred combination of transport improvements:

- Bus Rapid Transit as the preferred MRT Mode
- Fully Grade Separated intersections at the Basin Reserve

In addition, the following points are important to note:

- most PT commuters from Johnsonville and surrounding suburbs are dependent on bus services into and through the CBD. Because LGWM has decided on an option to limit the Golden Mile to only 100 buses per hour there will not be enough capacity to support buses entering the CBD from the North in the future. **The BRT Option bus corridor will be better able support the Second Alternative Bus Route** for buses carrying commuters from Northern, Western and Eastern suburbs.
- The BRT Option is also more likely to provide better bus corridor support for PT services to South Wellington Suburbs away from the LRT Route. There is no information on how each MRT option will impact the PT service to Wellington South areas away from the #1 bus route that will still be served by buses (Owhiro Bay, Southgate, Melrose, Houghton Bay) and on intermediate bus served areas (Constable Street and Taranaki Street). It is of note that the need for forced interchange to/from feeder buses onto light rail was one of the biggest "Disbenefits" of the light rail options in the 2013 Spine Study (and the 2018 GWRC Bus Review changes show how much Wellingtonians hate interchanging).
- One new 2-Lane parallel Tunnel to the current Mt Vic Tunnel is preferred as it is likely significantly less expensive yet will provide the equivalent capacity of the two new 2-lane tunnels proposed in Options 1 & 2

What don't you like about these options?

Is there an option you don't like? Why? Is there something that you really disagree with, or see as a problem?

The three Light Rail Options are not preferred because:

- They do not support PT service access for Wellingtonians living in Northern and Western Suburbs.
- It is unclear that a second Alternative Bus Corridor required under the Golden Mile Project can fit onto the LRT corridor as verbally proposed by the LGWM Team. If it is not created, then some peak time Bus PT services to Northern and Western suburbs could be still be stuck on congested CBD streets or, even worse, be terminated at the edge of the CBD with commuters being forced to interchange (and the 2018 GWRC Bus Review changes show how much Wellingtonians hate interchanging).
- LRT cannot provide a seamless North-South PT service for Wellington. Residents of Johnsonville travelling to the Hospital will be forced to transfer under LRT options but it may be possible to continue the very successful #1 Bus Service from Churton Park to Island Bay under the BRT Option.

The options that do not grade separate the Basin intersection are also not preferred. This is a major traffic bottleneck and needs to be fixed to enable reliable and efficient transport throughout the city.

Is there something missing?

Yes, neither LGWM nor the GWRC have any supporting Wellington Bus Plan that outlines how all the future bus services will fit together to provide a reliable and effective PT service to most of Wellington city. In LGWM is silent on the impact of each MRT option on the cities bus services that will carry most PT users through the city.

Which type of mass rapid transit do you prefer? Why?

- Bus Rapid Transit

Any comments?

See comments on the preference for Option 2 BRT above.

And finally, if you'd like to give us additional feedback on specific roads and details on the routes in this plan

LGWM has not provided sufficient detailed information about any of the options to support any feedback on specific roads and routes (see below).

Did you find the information useful for giving feedback?

You can refer back to the option information by tapping the 'information' tab at the top of this screen at any time.

No

Any comments?

Firstly, the LGWM web site is very flashy but does not provide much useful information. Here are several obvious transport questions that the LGWM information fails to provide:

- 1) Where will the Alternative Bus Corridor required under the Golden Mile Project be implemented with each MRT Option?
- 2) Will bus commuters from Wellington North or Wellington West be forced to interchange onto MRT to travel through the CBD?
- 3) What is the service frequency and travel time (peak and off peak) for each MRT Option to Island Bay?
- 4) What is the service frequency and travel time (peak and off peak) for each bus service to Wellington East?
- 5) Options 1 & 2 both have two new 2-lane tunnels which are longer and angled. Are they designed to enable future conversion to light rail MRT and to what extent does this raise the cost?
- 6) LGWM are also considering, as an alternative to two new 2-lane tunnels, building one 2-lane tunnel beside the current Mt Vic tunnel. What is the cost difference between building the two new 2-lane tunnels and one 2-lane tunnel beside the current Mt Vic tunnel?
- 7) Option 1 has "regular bus priority" PT to serve Wellington East.
 - Will Wellington East buses travel through to the railway station?
 - if so, what is the route through the CBD (if not, where do they stop)?
 - How much will the bus priority to the East cost to build and also operate?
- 8) Option 2 has Bus Rapid Transit to Wellington East.
 - What is the benefit of BRT to the East if travel time from Miramar Shops to the railway station is the same as Regular Bus Priority under Option 1?
 - How much will BRT to the East cost to build and also operate?
- 9) How will each MRT option will impact the PT service to Wellington South areas away from the #1 bus route that will still be served by buses (Owhiro Bay, Southgate, Melrose, Houghton Bay) and on intermediate bus served areas (Constable Street and Taranaki Street). It is of note that the need for forced interchange to/from feeder buses onto light rail was one of the biggest "Disbenefits" of the light rail options in the 2013 Spine Study

10) Where will the service depots for the MRT vehicles be located for each option?

The failure by LGWM to provide this basic information on our future major transport investment severely compromises the ability of the public to properly understand the implications for each of the proposed options and therefore, the whole point of the consultation.

Secondly, the ability of the public to provide feedback is only through the heavily scripted Survey Monkey based dialog frame and no alternative forms of feedback were supported (Email, paper document). This is very unfair on the large segment of the public that is not very electronically capable or would prefer to submit using a more traditional forms of feedback.

Most importantly for a multi-billion dollar project, LGWM have only published the high level cost and benefit totals for each proposed option. However, there are indications that some of the LGWM cost information may be inaccurate. One reason is the [GWRC 2013 Public Transport Spine Study](#) (PTSS) considered very similar options but these had very different total costs¹:

	Light Rail Transit	Note	Bus Rapid Transit	Note	Difference Ratio
2021 LGWM MRT Option Costs ²	\$2,800M	³	\$2,600M	⁴	1.1
2013 PTSS Option Capital Costs ⁵	\$588.4M	⁶	\$207.1M		2.8

It is very puzzling that the 2013 PTSS build costs for equivalent LRT and BRT Options have an implementation cost difference of 2.8 while just 8 years later the cost difference between the equivalent LRT and BRT options is now only 1.1? LGWM has not explained or commented on the reason for this cost difference.

The absolute difference in implementation costs after just 8 years is also staggeringly different:

	Light Rail Transit	Note	Bus Rapid Transit	Note
2021 LGWM MRT Option Capital Costs ⁷	\$2,800M	⁸	\$2,600M	⁹
2013 PTSS Option Capital Costs ¹⁰	\$938M		\$556.7M	¹¹

¹ It is also of note that this earlier major transport study **did** publish all the requested information at the start of the public consultation on its option that is now being refused by LGWM.

² Source: LGWM [Programme Cost Summary Technical Note](#) (October 2021)

³ LGWM Option i LRT Option

⁴ LGWM Option ii BRT Option

⁵ Source: PTSS [Appendix E - Option Cost Methodology](#)

⁶ LRT Cost **excludes** the cost of the LRT Tunnel through Mt Victoria as this was not required for Bus Rapid Transit

⁷ Source: LGWM [Programme Cost Summary Technical Note](#) (October 2021)

⁸ LGWM Option i LRT Option

⁹ LGWM Option ii BRT Option

¹⁰ Source: PTSS [Appendix E - Option Cost Methodology](#)

¹¹ BRT Cost **includes** the cost of the proposed LRT Tunnel through Mt Victoria to make the COST comparison equivalent.

Difference Ratio	3.0	4.7
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Again the escalation in capital cost estimates in just 8 years is very puzzling:

- why is the LGWM LRT Option i capital cost is 3 times greater than the 2013 PTSS LRT Option when LGWM only has LRT travelling to Island Bay and the PTSS had a larger LRT network travelling to both Newtown and Kilbirnie?
- why is, even after adding the cost of a dedicated BRT tunnel, is the LGWM BRT Option ii capital cost nearly 5 times greater than the 2013 PTSS BRT Option when the proposed BRT networks are actually very similar in design and performance?

In addition, LGWM has invited submitters to comment on other options such as only having one shorter parallel Mt Vic traffic tunnel¹² (as proposed by the 2013 Spine Study). But, without any cost breakdown, it is impossible to determine the cost saving and properly comment on the alternative parallel Mt Vic tunnel proposed by LGWM.

To try and understand the background analysis used to support the LGWM MRT Project options, the JCA submitted an Official Information Request to LGWM who then refused to provide any detailed cost or detailed benefit analysis. Even though LGWM was in the middle of running its major public consultation on the options for major investments in Wellington PT, the LGWM Interim Programme Director, David Dunlop, still claimed:

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider there are any other factors which would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

The JCA has submitted a formal complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman about LGWM withholding basic background information in support of its consultation on this huge multi-billion dollar project.

¹² Refer [LGWM Programme Affordable Short List Options Report](#). October 2021. Section 3

Development of Programme Affordable Short List Options:

Each of the four Programme Affordable Short List options are summarised in Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8. It is noted that in Options i and ii, a diagonal tunnel is shown at Mt Victoria tunnel however a parallel tunnel has not been discounted.