**Delivering improved public transport to provincial New Zealand**

There is a public transport deficit in provincial New Zealand. Public transport (PT) in smaller centres in New Zealand is still being constrained by historical and existing transport policy and investment. Transport investment in these areas continues to be disproportionately focused on the private car. We fall a long way behind our larger urban centres in terms of both levels of investment and use of PT. And that’s without recognising the limitations of those PT networks.

Under-investment by local councils is almost always cumulative. Too much focus is placed on keeping rates increases artificially low. Too often this falls short of what is being asked of us by many parts of our community. In many cases, we will never reach the level of investment necessary for our PT networks with a funding ‘shock’.

**What’s coming up for Palmerston North?**

Such a shock is happening for Palmerston North. From 4 March 2024, Palmerston North will more than double the level of public transport provided in the city. This change will coincide with Palmerston North being the first city in New Zealand to operate a fully EV bus fleet. Service frequency at peak times on all main routes will improve from running every 45 minutes to every 15 minutes. The new network is designed to future-proof growth areas in Palmerston North as well as provide PT spines to support future land use changes and densification.

By the time of the TG Conference 2024, the new service will have been running for three months. There will be an opportunity to share some of the early successes, challenges and future opportunities for the new service.

**Further reading:**

<https://www.horizons.govt.nz/buses-transport/palmerston-north-and-ashhurst-network>

<https://www.horizons.govt.nz/news/work-begins-to-prepare-palmy-for-its-new-connected>

**Presentation format:**

I’m happy to fit across any session format.