

15 August 2024

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-29838

By email: [REDACTED] -

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2024-176**

I refer to your request for information dated 26 July 2024, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 26 July 2024. You have requested the following:

*“I live in Tirohanga and have received rates. \$473.76 is for GWRC public transport. Matters for differentiation specify location and use. Due to the limited schedule of the Melling train it doesn't coincide with our households schedule. We have been told that Melling train station is also closing some time this rate period due to the interchange. How has this been taken into account for calculating the charge? Can you please also explain how use is calculated?”*

### **Greater Wellington's response follows:**

Public Transport is the single largest activity that Council funds. It delivers benefits to the whole region by reducing emissions that would otherwise be produced by private transportations, fewer vehicles on the road, safer roads, ability for tourism and economic dispersal, and more liveable environments.

To fund public transport, Greater Wellington relies on central government funding, user charges and rates, as outlined in our Revenue and Financing Policy. This policy can be found on our website: <https://ltp.gw.govt.nz/assets/LTP-21-31/supporting-policies/2022-Revenue-and-Financing-Policy-v2.pdf>

A mixture of user charges (fares) and targeted rates are used to provide transparency to service users, residents, ratepayers, and funders about the costs and relative shares paid by different groups.

Although public transport can be viewed to only benefit the people who use it directly, enabling them to get to work, school, retail, and social activities etc, the reality is that Council have

deemed the benefits to be much broader, meaning a targeted differential is an appropriate funding tool.

The targeted differential takes into account the location and level of service for public transport. This means those who are located in areas where their access to utilising the services is greater, will contribute more to the targeted rate. No matter how far any ratepayer lives from a service, they are still required to contribute towards the network for the greater good.

The target differentials and categories are:

- Wellington CBD - 7
- Business (excluding Wairarapa) - 1.4
- Business (Wairarapa) - 1
- Residential (excluding Wairarapa and Ōtaki) - 1
- Residential (Wairarapa and Ōtaki) - 0.5
- Rural - 0.25

As the public transport network changes, the differentials can change. Any changes will be consulted with the public, before any council decisions to change them are made. The differentials are stated in the funding impacts statements in the Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan.

Changes to the network, such as Melling Station, will not trigger a consultation to change the differentials for that area. In terms of the station's closure, Council's endorsement of the temporary closure of Melling Station, for Riverlink works, is conditional on alternative public transport options being made available that provide a similar or enhanced level of service for affected passengers.

The level of use, to determine a targeted differential, is not considered by singular station use, but on a network basis. Rates are not linked to specific service provision.

The targeted differential rate is applied using Capital Values (CV). Greater Wellington uses 'Equalised capital Value' (ECV) to ensure an even a fair distribution of the rates when setting rates resolutions each year.

Within the region, different Territorial Authorities (TA) undertake general revaluations at different times. To equalise the values, each year Council gets a registered valuer (Quotable Value) to estimate the projected valuations of all the rateable land within the region. This

estimation is enabled under section 131 of the Local Government Rating Act. This means that rates are assessed on a consistent valuation basis, regardless of the timing of individual TA's revaluations.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Jacob Boyes

Kaiwhakahaere Matua, Pūtea me ngā Tūraru | Group Manager Finance and Risk (acting)