

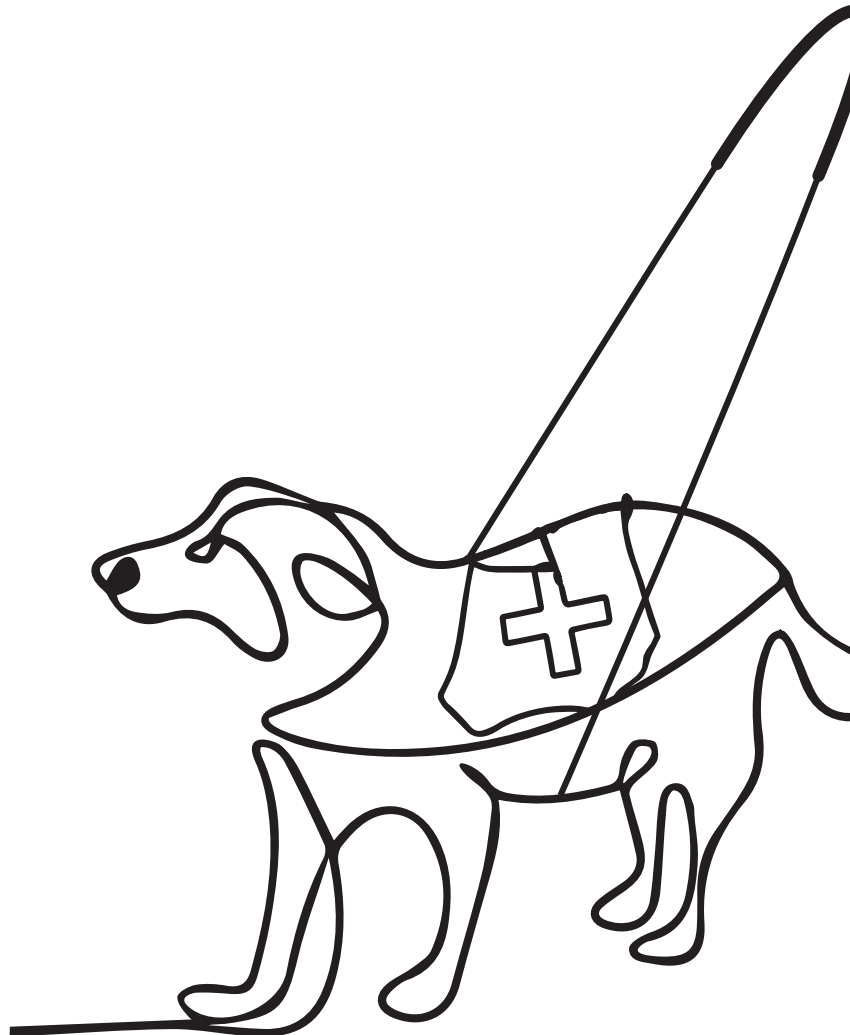
# Accessibility Action Plan

August 2023



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## How this plan was prepared

Metlink made a commitment to an **Accessibility Charter** in 2021 and have since engaged with the public transport community that have accessibility needs, disability experts and front-line staff, to create a detailed **Research Report**.

The vision of the Charter is to ensure that 'The Metlink public transport network is accessible for all with ease and dignity'.

### Our process

After Metlink adopted the Charter, our team talked with the disability community to understand the details of barriers and 'pain points', and the cumulative effect these have on a person when travelling on our public transport network. We also asked for feedback from our frontline staff, including bus drivers.

Through this co-design we created the Metlink Accessibility Action Plan. This Plan is the roadmap for delivering Metlink's commitment to increasing accessibility

for our disabled community on the public transport network between 2021 to 2031.

We will review the Plan and publish our findings annually, so we are regularly checking that our goals and priorities are on track, and also so the disability community has regular input into the process.

### What is next?

One of the main goals of this Action Plan is for our team to build a fundable package of activities for inclusion in the Greater Wellington (GW) 2024 Long Term Plan (LTP) and Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP), so that substantial improvements are possible.





## More detail about our approach

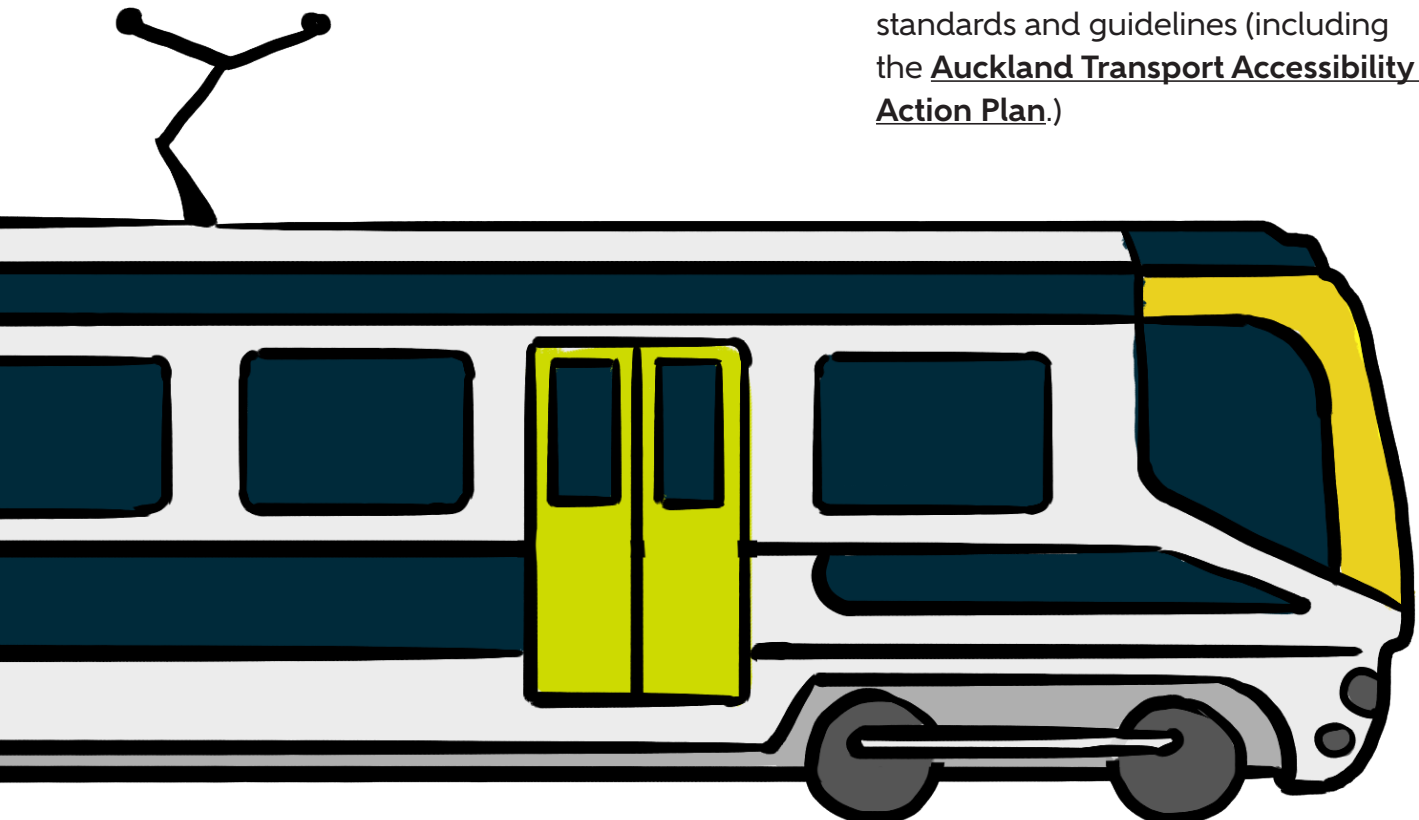
The Metlink Accessibility Action Plan was developed over a twelve month period of co-design and in-depth in-person discussions with:

- Over 40 disabled public transport users and their advocates - including representatives from the blind, mobility, hearing, learning, neurological and invisible disability communities.
- Our Metlink team and our operators frontline staff, including bus drivers, to understand their experience working with disabled customers.
- Disability representatives in our Public Transport Advisory Group (PTAG), in order to plan how we develop the action plan.

- A group of trusted advisors who represented different perspectives and assisted in reviewing and ranking the results and ideas for the proposed actions.

We also did a deep dive into past research reports to identify compliant trends:

- [Human Rights Commission Inquiry, 2005](#)
- Disabled Persons Assembly 'Accessible Journey', 2019
- DHB Transport Report, 2022
- [Waka Kotahi 'Transport experiences of disabled people', 2022](#)
- Metlink review of Total Mobility Services in Porirua and Kapiti, 2021
- Metlink complaints and patronage data
- Overseas and New Zealand initiatives, standards and guidelines (including the [Auckland Transport Accessibility Action Plan.](#))





## Ranking ideas

Our research led to a list of 16 possible actions, which were ranked by people with personal experience, sector representatives, support workers and trusted advisors on accessibility. This is how different groups have ranked some of the most popular ideas.

	All	Mobility	Blind Community	Neurodiverse /Learning	Other Activity Limitations	Advisor /Supporter
1	Accessibility training for all staff	Accessible station improvement programme	Bus replacing trains improvement programme	Bus replacing trains improvement programme	Accessible bus stop improvement programme	Accessibility training for all staff
2	Accessible station improvement programme	Accessibility training for all staff	Accessibility training for all staff	Invisible disability campaign	Accessible station improvement programme	Accessible bus stop improvement programme
3	Accessible bus stop improvement programme	Accessible bus stop improvement programme	Usability and accessibility improvements (web & app)	On-demand or community transport service	Accessibility training for all staff	Accessible station improvement programme
4	Bus replacing trains improvement programme	On-demand or community transport service	Talking buses	Accessibility training for all staff	Improve accessible bus design over time	On-demand or community transport service
5	On-demand or community transport service	Invisible disability campaign	Personal accessibility assistance	Improve accessible bus design over time	Ability to view seat availability on buses in real time	More support for accessibility apps and other tech solutions
6	Usability and accessibility improvements (web & app)	Additional resource for Metlink contact centre	More support for accessibility apps and other tech solutions	More support for accessibility apps and other tech solutions	Usability and accessibility improvements (web & app)	Talking buses
7	Improve accessible bus design over time	Bus replacing trains improvement programme	Accessible bus stop improvement programme	Accessible station improvement programme	Improve access to the ferry and its ports	Improve accessible bus design over time
8	Talking buses	Usability and accessibility improvements (web & app)	Additional resource for Metlink contact centre	'Guaranteed accessibility corridors' (regional)	Additional resource for Metlink contact centre	Usability and accessibility improvements (web & app)
9	More support for accessibility apps and other tech solutions	Improve access to the ferry and its ports	Accessible station improvement programme	Accessible bus stop improvement programme	On-demand or community transport service	Bus replacing trains improvement programme
10	Additional resource for Metlink contact centre	'Guaranteed accessibility corridors' (regional)	Improve accessible bus design over time	Usability and accessibility improvements (web & app)	Invisible disability campaign	Ability to view seat availability on buses in real time



## The path ahead & what to expect

This Plan is a systematic pathway to planning and a commitment to improvements on our public transport network for users with accessibility requirements.

In the past, improvements or initiatives in regard to accessibility have tended to be one-off projects or ad hoc, rather than part of an over-arching vision, due to competing priorities.

To achieve a truly accessible network, it is critical to have the input from those in our community who are affected, along with the Metlink team and associated partners. For this reason, our adopted mantra is, 'Nothing about us, without us' and it will be employed throughout this project.

For this reason, we will plan, design and test any actions with the input and active participation of disabled people and their advocates.

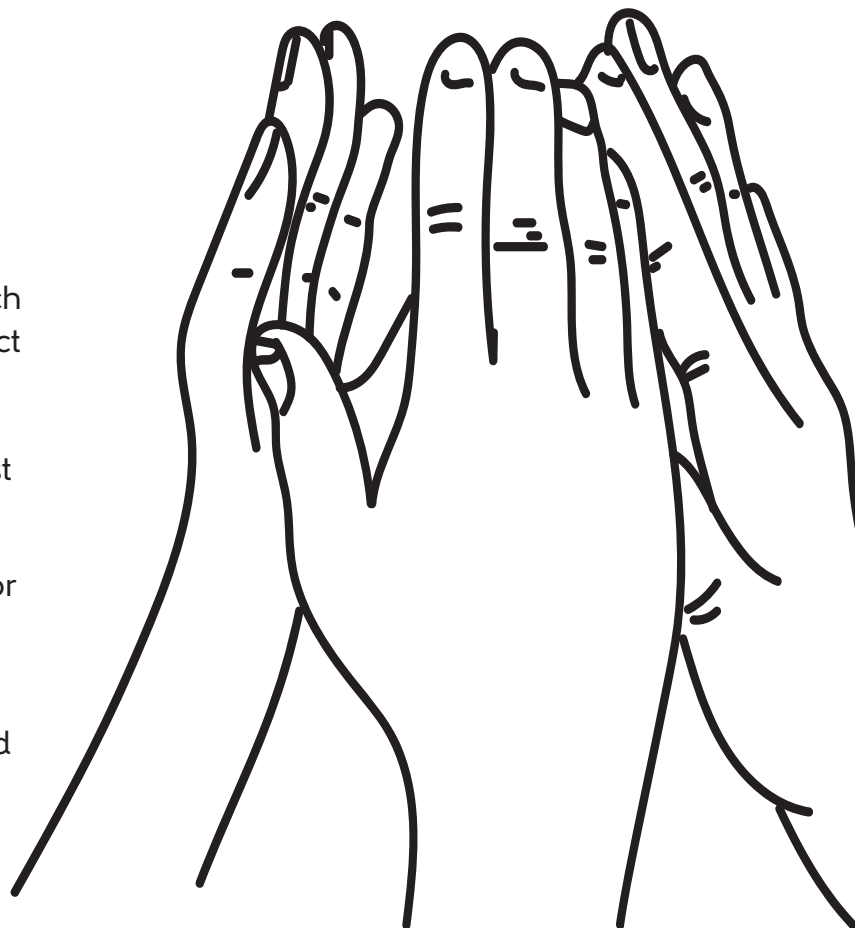
Having committed to a co-design approach means we will not always be able to predict the exact outcome of each action and the associated timing. Together we will weigh up the pros and cons, and identify the best plan of attack.

To set the greater Wellington region up for sustainable improvements, we will:

- Request and secure substantial funding for our nominated actions and complete the shared planning that is required to reach our goals.

- Review available standards and guidelines, adapt them for our use and incorporate them into our everyday practice.
- Work closely with central government and councils in our region to ensure shared barriers are identified and actions applied.
- Increase our network of advisors and testers from the disability community, so that practical testing will become part of our 'business as usual' processes.

***'Nothing about us,  
without us.'***





## Securing funding

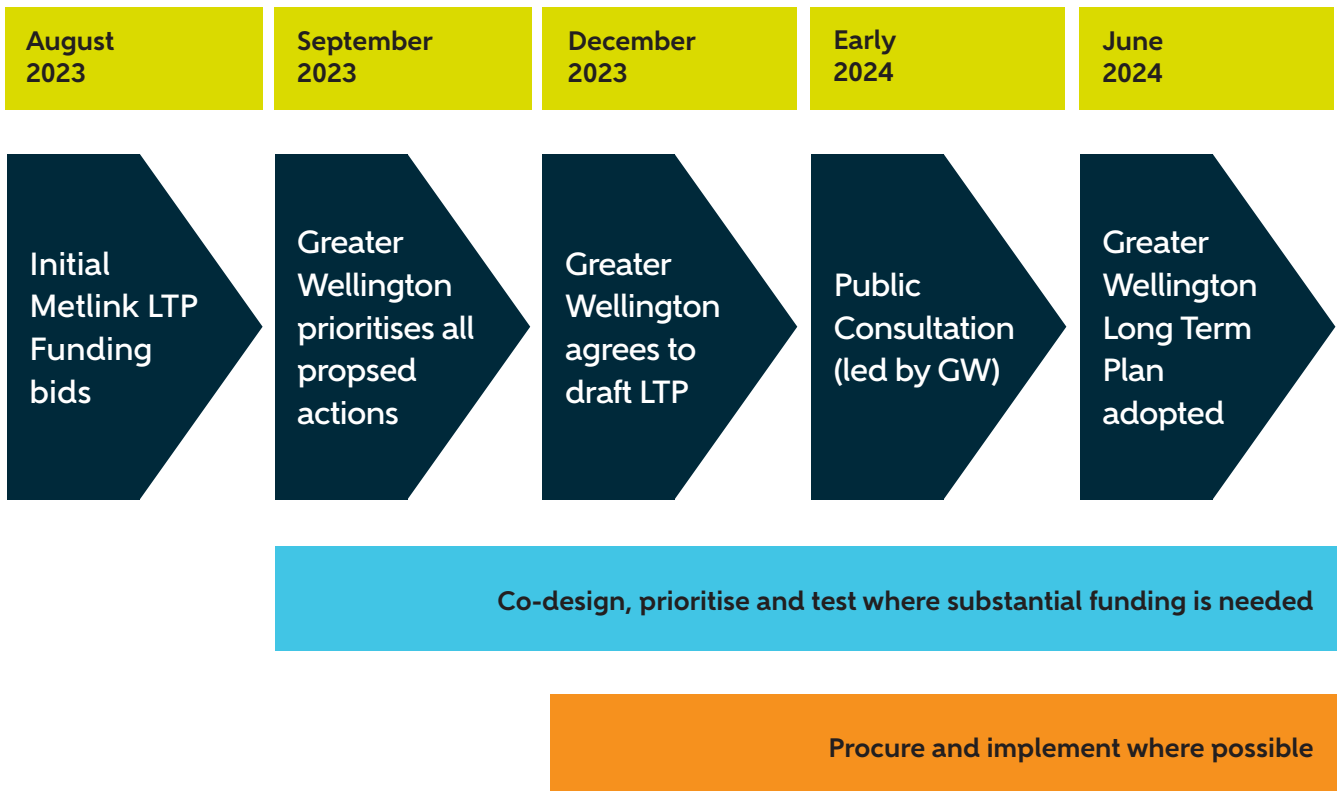
We are able to fund new accessibility initiatives in two different ways:

- The first is through our current operating budget - which is limited, but we have more direct control over.
- The second is through dedicated funding in the Greater Wellington Long Term Plan - which is more substantial, but is still a finite pool of money that gets prioritised alongside other regional council responsibilities.

It is possible that some of our bids will not receive the requested funding, so we will discuss alternative options as part of our planning and co-design engagements.

We will run the funding and planning/co-design phases in tandem, so that initiatives that do fit into our operating budgets can be delivered without delay, while the more substantial initiatives are ready to roll-out when their funding bids are hopefully successful further down the track.

The actions highlighted in this plan will be submitted into the initial Metlink Long Term Plan (LTP) funding bid.





# The Action Plan

## 2024 Accessibility Action Plan Initiatives

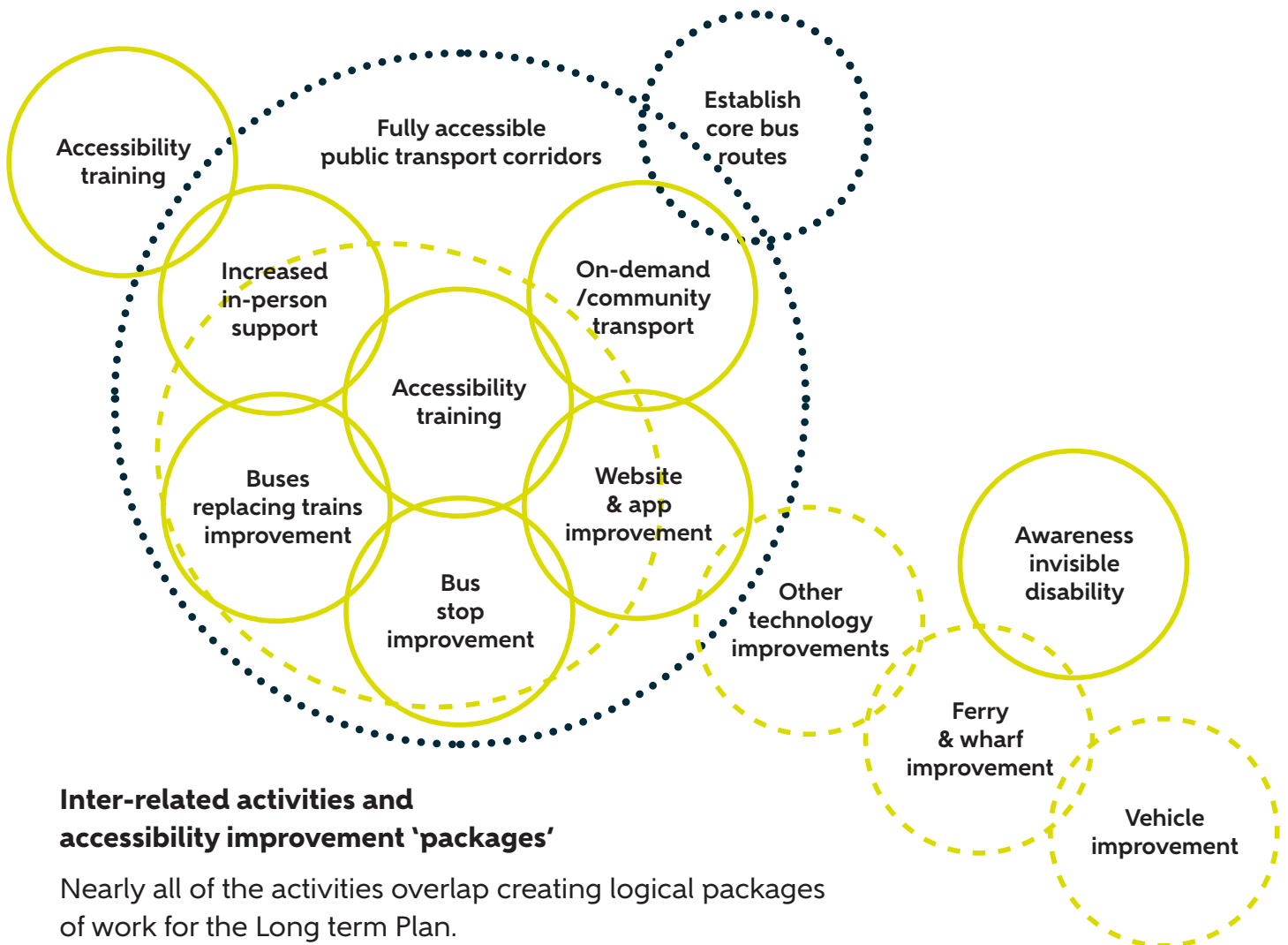
Our planned initiatives:

- Accessibility training programme
- Station accessibility improvements
- Bus stop accessibility improvements
- Increased in-person support
- Vehicle accessibility improvements
- Awareness of invisible disabilities
- Accessibility technology aids

- On-demand & community transport
- Improvements to ferry & wharves
- Fully accessible Public transport corridors

Live Initiatives:

- On-bus announcement system
- Website & app improvements
- Buses replacing trains stop accessibility improvements
- Real time information replacement & audio real time information signs



### Inter-related activities and accessibility improvement 'packages'

Nearly all of the activities overlap creating logical packages of work for the Long term Plan.



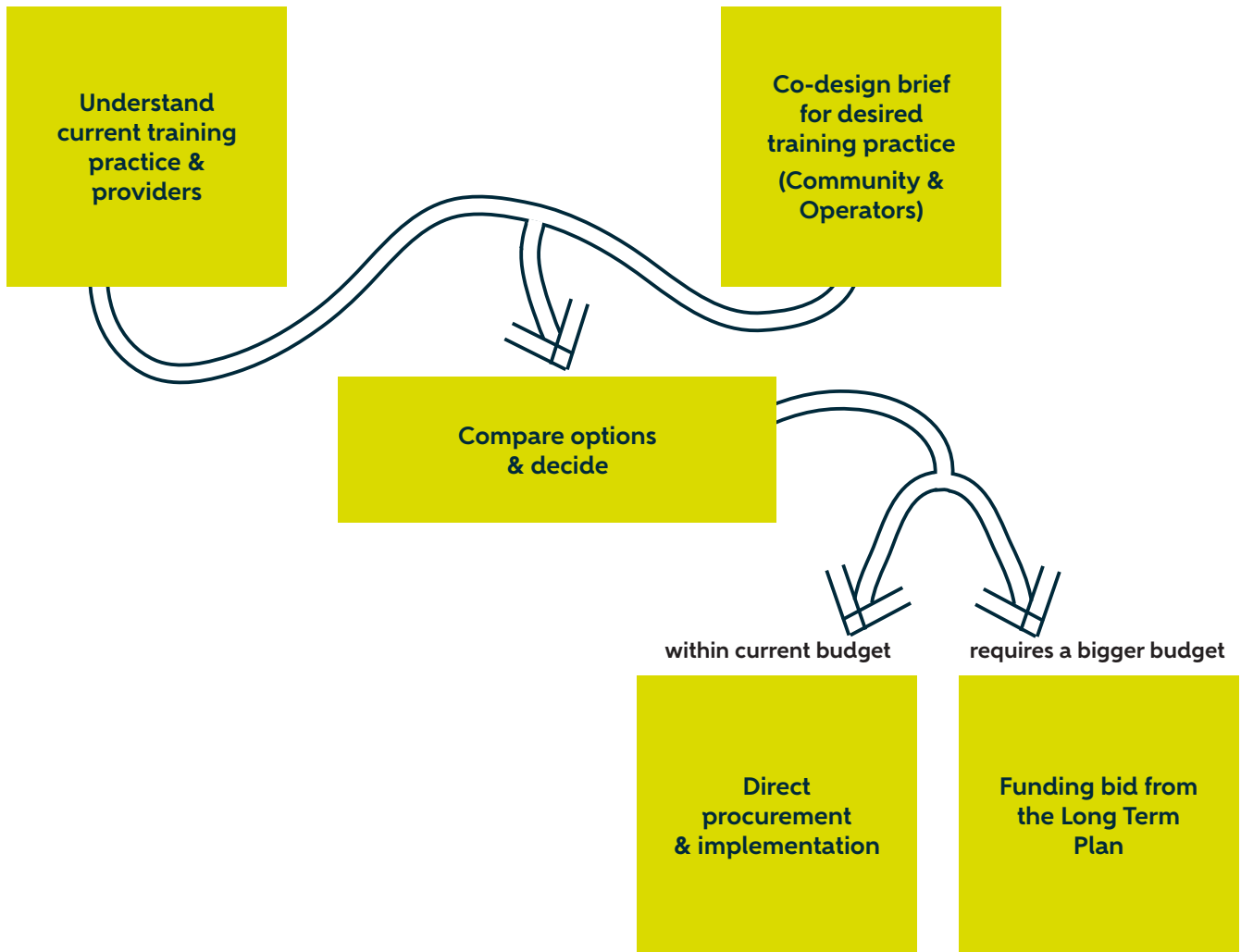


# How we will approach each action

## 1. Accessibility training programme

### Where we are now

Currently training is focused on operations and addresses disabilities in general terms. Transdev runs accessibility training, but Metlink office staff have no general training around accessibility (unless individually arranged).



### At the completion of the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan, we will:

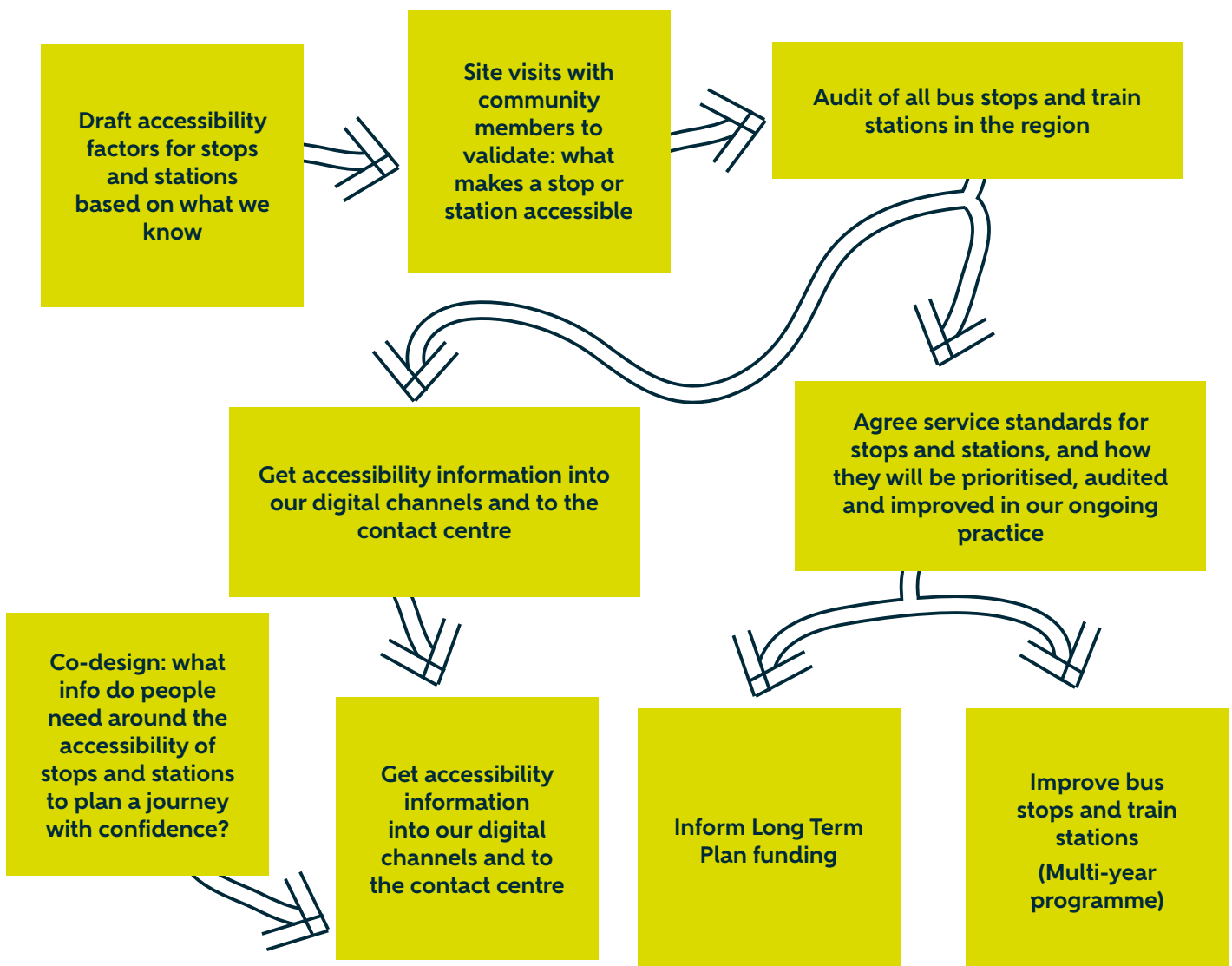
Have an agreed approach for accessibility training, and if it fits in the existing budget, we will have begun work on the design and implementation of the practice.



## 2. Stops and stations improvements

### Where we are now

At the moment, accessibility is part of our practice in and around bus stops and stations. However, how we apply which standards, test designs and involve the community is ad hoc, with a pressure on priorities.



### At the completion of the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan, we will:

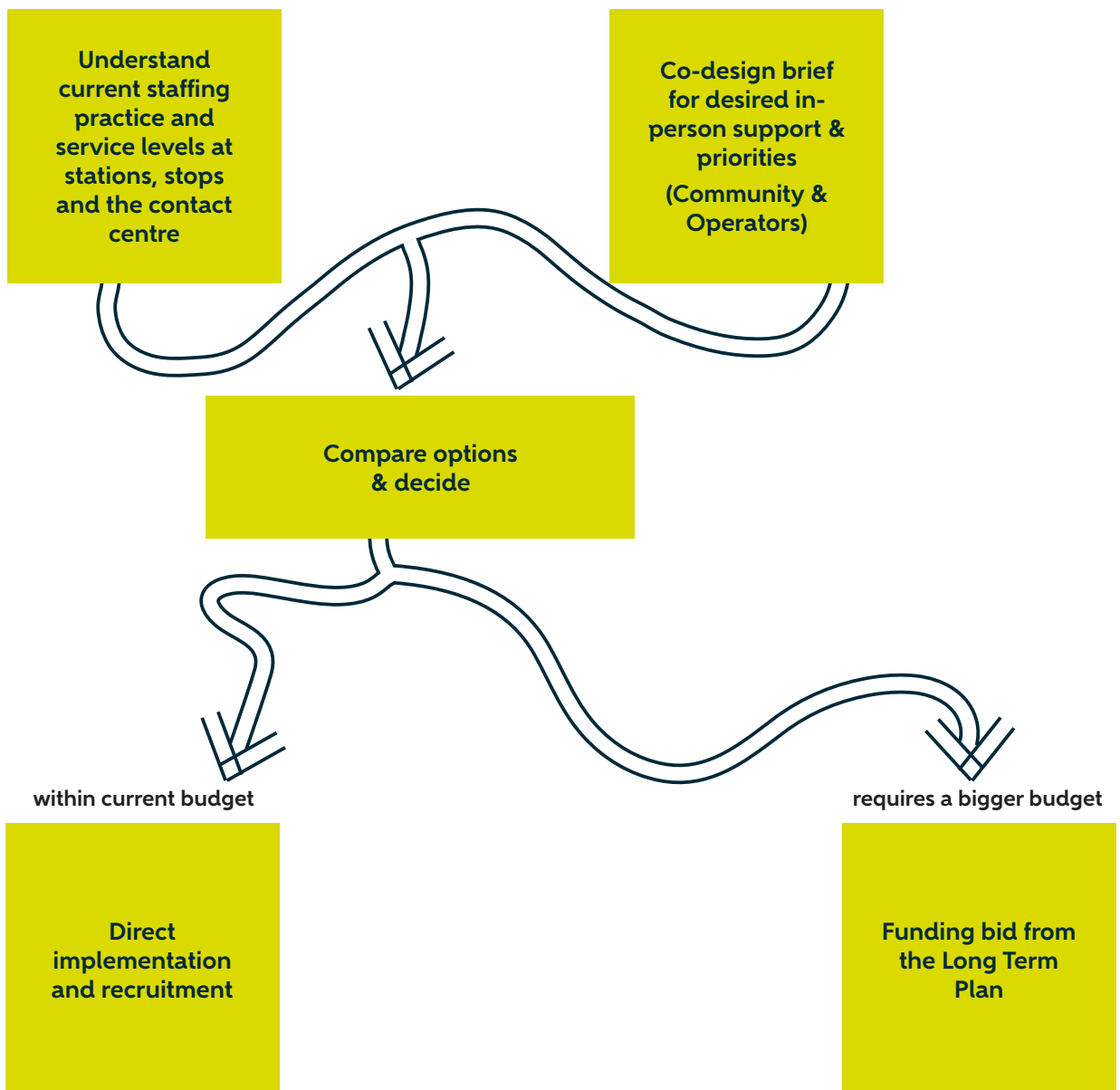
Publish comprehensive accessibility details about bus stops and train stations on our website and app. We will have bids for funding and implement accessibility in our planning and design practice. For bus stops this may take several years, as there are thousands of stops. We have existing engineering reports for train stations, so this will be a quicker process.



### 3. In-person support

#### Where we are now

We do not have any dedicated mobility/accessibility support. Such support is part of many other roles in the network. We need to understand gaps and opportunities for improvement.



**At the completion of the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan, we will:**

Either have an agreed plan for improvements on in-person support that can bid for funding, or we will be ready to implement and recruit, and possibly pilot ideas.



#### 4. Vehicle improvements

*Goal:* Accessibility considerations to be included in Asset Management Plan and future procurement.

*To do in the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan:*

- Co-design workshop with community members.
- Prioritise and scope what can be done in 23/24.

#### 5. Awareness of hidden disabilities

*Goal:* Improve the experience and comfort of travellers with hidden disabilities.

*To do in the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan:*

- Collectively discuss possible approaches, such as lanyard systems and awareness campaigns.
- Include hidden disability awareness into training.

#### 6. Accessibility technology aids

*Goal:* Improve digital channels and use of technology solutions that can reduce barriers, or make travel more comfortable.

*To do in the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan:*

- Audit of known accessibility issues – prioritise and schedule testing with users where needed.
- Co-design workshop with community members of tech ideas or application, rank and scope feasibility.

#### 7. On-demand and Total Mobility (TM)

*Goal:* Alternative travel modes as part of the accessible network.

*To do in the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan:*

- Scope support enhancements for Tawa on Demand trial – booking and payment options outside of the current app.
- Review Operating Model On Demand and Total Mobility (Metlink).

#### 8. Ferry and wharves

*Goal:* Accessibility improvements to the Easy By West Ferry and its wharves.

*To do in the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan:*

- This is owned by East/West Ferry – recommend an engineers report to make the ferry fully accessible.
- Metlink to facilitate contacts to the community for co-design.

#### 9. Accessible corridors

*Goal:* Coordinate our efforts from other actions so that regional connections are improved and made accessible delivering increased confidence.

*To do in the 2023 - 2034 Accessibility Action Plan:*

- Consult with members of the community about what regional links are most desired and needed.
- This is expected to occur after progress is made on bus stop and station improvement planning.



## Measures of improvement

**Fewer complaints related to accessibility issues and barriers**

It is possible that public awareness of this action plan will lead to an initial increase in accessibility complaints. Metlink would welcome this as information about barriers and concerns is crucial for the Accessibility Action Plan. *(For use as a metric for success, complaints data will be assessed on qualitative factors in the first year.)*

**Fewer incident reports related to accessibility issues and barriers**

**More people with disabilities travelling with public transport (measured though boardings with concessions)**

