

Executive Summary – He Kupu Whakataki

The 2010 Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy (the RLTS) is a statutory document prepared under the Land Transport Management Act (LTMA) 2003. The RLTS sets the direction for the region's transport system for the next 30 years. The strategy identifies the actions, policies, priorities and funding needed to achieve a land transport system that enhances the Auckland region as a great place to live, work and play.

Auckland Transport is expected to be required to act in a way that is consistent with the new RLTS.

Need for strong, effective transport strategy

With a 2009 population of 1.4 million, the Auckland region is currently home to 33 per cent of the population of New Zealand. By 2041 the population of the Auckland region is expected to grow to 2.1 million, making up 40 per cent of the country's population.

Latest population projections indicate Auckland is growing at 1.5 per cent each year, compared to the rest of New Zealand at 1.1 per cent each year. The Auckland region covers an area of 499, 898 hectares, of which 55,922 hectares are urban.

Auckland plays a vital role in the national economy, generating 37 per cent of national GDP, the highest proportion of a nation's GDP generated by a single city/region in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Auckland ports handle 26 per cent by value and 11 per cent by weight of all NZ exports, and 48 per cent by value and 21 per cent by weight of all NZ imports. The Auckland Airport handles 79 per cent by value and 83 per cent by weight of all NZ exports transported by air and 93 per cent by value and 91 per cent by weight of imports transported by air.



View of Auckland Harbour Bridge (courtesy of Auckland City Council)

Auckland does not exist in isolation. Auckland has strong interregional links with its neighbours Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Northland. Significant population growth and economic activity currently occurs in these four regions and is projected to increase in importance, with potentially significant implications for the future of Auckland region's transport system. It is expected that by 2031, these regions will account for 78 per cent of New Zealand's population (currently 52 per cent). In addition, by 2025 Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Waikato are expected to generate half of the country's GDP, and currently these three regions are responsible for the production and attraction of over half of all road and rail freight in New Zealand.

For quality of life, Auckland consistently ranks in the top 10 with OECD cities such as Vancouver. However, in respect of infrastructure provision, while Vancouver ranks fifth, Auckland ranks in the bottom group at 46.

An effective and reliable transport system and addressing Auckland's long-standing transport infrastructure deficit are critically important to the region's and New Zealand's economy, and to the well-being of Aucklanders. Business surveys report that transport is the number one issue of concern for more than 90 per cent of businesses. Currently the region has about 200,000 heavy and light freight vehicles, and 20 per cent of total motor vehicle registrations. Freight volume trips are projected to double by 2020. Other surveys of Aucklanders consistently report traffic congestion, poor public transport and air pollution caused by traffic as main concerns. The need for improvements is driven both by the need to "catch up" with the effects of past growth while catering for expected future growth.

Currently the Auckland transport system is highly dependent on the use of motor vehicles. This means that the effective operation of the transport system is vulnerable to increasing and volatile oil prices, to climate change concerns, and to potential actions to reduce the use of fossil fuels. Dependence on motor vehicles also means that increasing vehicle use impacts on local communities and emissions from motor vehicles impact on air and water quality. It can be difficult for those without access to a motor vehicle to fully participate in society and contribute to the economy.

The Auckland transport system needs to provide users with good accessibility and choice, be reliable, adaptive to change, and resilient to major incidents and external shocks.

It is important that Auckland develops and implements an effective and affordable transport strategy.

Vision

The vision for this strategy is a transport system that enhances the Auckland region, where:

- people and goods are able to move when and where necessary
- the transport supports vibrant, well designed, attractive and environmentally sustainable urban and rural centres, business and economic activity, and access to social, cultural and recreational activities
- the streets are safe and attractive places for people and the community
- the distinct volcanic and coastal (whenua, moana/awa) character of the region and the cultural values of its inhabitants (nga tangata katoa) is protected and enhanced
- getting around by all modes is integrated, safe, effective, and accessible to all including people with disabilities
- people have choices which enable them to participate equitably in society, especially those with mobility issues, such as children and the elderly, and those most disadvantaged
- the natural environment and human health are protected and enhanced
- the transport resources are used efficiently, supported by sustainable, innovative design practices
- the transport system is resilient in the event of shocks and is adaptable to change.

The strategy

The strategy for achieving this vision in Auckland is to develop a transport system which provides balanced levels of access, high reliability and safety, and where people and businesses have realistic choices about how and where they travel.

While this will require continued investment to complete the agreed strategic roading system, including giving greater attention to improving the efficiency of the network of arterial roads, there is a strong need for significantly greater investment in public transport (both infrastructure and services), walking, cycling, and behaviour change measures to counter long term under investment in these modes.

The investment in public transport, walking, cycling and behaviour change measures will limit growth in private car use and when combined with some improvements to the road network will be more effective in reducing growth in congestion and supporting national economic growth and productivity than road investment alone.

By providing greater balance, variety and choice to all parts of the region, this strategy will result in a transport system which is more resilient than the current system. It will be better able to cope with external shocks such as economic downturns, oil price volatility and climate change concerns, and to benefit from advances and innovations in engine, fuel, public transport, highway management and other technologies.

This strategy is integrated with Auckland's land use strategy. It seeks to shape travel demand to reduce the impact on the economy that would otherwise arise from increasing congestion and energy costs. Auckland's land use strategy is to manage the expected growth of Auckland by accommodating an increasing proportion of businesses and households in higher density, mixed used centres and corridors with good transport connections, and reducing the proportion of growth which is accommodated in the expansion of the urban area and generalised infill. This land use strategy will require investment in high capacity, highly reliable public transport links between the centres. In turn this form of urban development will make walking, cycling and public transport use more attractive and will contain individual reliance on car travel.

The above measures will result in a reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases per capita. The significant reductions required to meet the targets of the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy and New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS) 2008 will also require improvements in engine efficiency and the increasing use of non fossil fuels as transport energy sources. This is expected to be achieved by a combination of government leadership and regulation and commercially driven technological improvements.

Components of the strategy

Main components of the strategy are:

- Integrated transport ticketing and fares by 2012.
- Expanding the rapid transit network (RTN) and quality transit network (QTN) networks by:
 - electrifying the rail network and increasing frequencies by 2015
 - constructing the central business district (CBD) rail link by 2021 and further increasing frequency and capacity
 - constructing a rail loop to Auckland Airport in the period 2031-2040 with interim public transport and roading improvements
 - constructing the Avondale-Southdown rail connection in the period 2031-2040
 - extending the Northern Busway to Albany in the period 2021-2030 and then to Orewa in the period 2031-2040
 - developing the Panmure-Botany-Manukau bus connection as a QTN, with upgrading to rapid transit network (RTN) in the period 2021-2030
 - developing the Henderson-Westgate-Albany bus connection as a QTN.
- Higher frequency of services on the RTN and QTN and improvements to the local connector network (LCN).
- Continuing growth in behaviour change initiatives.
- Expanding the road network by:
 - completing the Western Ring Route by 2015
 - constructing the Auckland Manukau Eastern Transport Initiative (AMETI) (Panmure elements by 2020, Pakuranga to Botany in the period 2021-2030)
 - improving airport road access in the period 2021-2030.
- Widespread arterial road improvements with a focus on public transport and the regional strategic freight network (RSFN).
- Walking and cycling infrastructure improvements, including completion of 50 per cent of the regional cycle network by 2016 and 100 per cent by 2026.

Other important elements include:

- continued maintenance and renewal of the network
- safer and more reliable linkages to Northland, Waikato and the Bay of Plenty,
- road safety and rural transport improvements
- investigation into extending the rail system to the North Shore
- protection of the route for an additional crossing of the Waitemata Harbour
- investigation of a potential strategic road connection between East Tamaki and State Highway 20.

The strategy includes parking measures in those centres across the region which are planned for growth and good public transport. These measures include setting limits on parking, parking charges, park-and-ride facilities and providing cycle parking in accordance with the Regional Parking Strategy 2009.

Charging for road use was evaluated in the development of the strategy, and is potentially useful, but has not been included in this strategy. Charging for road use could be considered when realistic, equitable transport options are available.

Comparative project evaluation

This strategy proposes that an analysis of high cost projects using modern wider economic benefit assessment techniques that take into account agglomeration, employment and productivity benefits over the long term be undertaken to ensure projects offer value for money. As is a developing practice overseas, this analysis could see major road, rail and other transport projects being evaluated against a common set of wider economic benefit criteria than the traditional Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) system.

Funding the strategy

The principal sources of funding for transport are the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), local government and the New Zealand Government (in the case of rail investment). While the level of funding available beyond the next 10 years cannot be confidently predicted, it is estimated that over the 30-year period of this strategy, a range of \$33 billion to \$47 billion will be available. The cost of implementing this strategy is estimated at \$46 billion.

The National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) allocates 53 per cent of the Auckland transport budget over the next three years to state highway infrastructure and only 19 per cent to public transport. If a similar allocation were to be made over the 30-year life of the strategy, a significant shortfall in the funds required for Auckland's priority projects could result. However, it is noted that arrangements for funding rail infrastructure improvements are currently funded directly by the government and do not form part of the NLTP. The process for rail funding may well change in the future.

This strategy recognises the need to work with the Government for a change in funding arrangements to ensure funds are available to implement the strategy. A focus will be considering of whether financial assistance rates can be adjusted to encourage investment to support the strategy.

Implementing the strategy

Chapter five of this strategy contains 13 policies listing the actions needed by local and national government and by key stakeholders to implement the strategy. The policies are grouped into demand policies (land use, economic measures and behaviour change), supply policies (improving transport choice, network management and additional road capacity) and process policies (giving effect to the RLTS, funding, affordability, integration, safety, responsiveness and sustainability). Each policy identifies the organisations responsible for implementing the policy.

Local government and central government agencies will need to work together to implement the strategy. There will be a need to integrate funding, operating and construction projects, and to undertake the investigations and forward planning which will enable future projects to be properly identified and to be constructed when necessary. NZTA and local government are active in investigating future projects but KiwiRail is a relatively new organisation and there is a need for it to fully resource the development of a robust forward programme.