

AUCKLAND BUSINESS FORUM*Outcome: Integrated Transport Network*

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STRATEGIC AUCKLAND TRANSPORT AGENDA FOR THE NEXT GOVERNMENT

Auckland's transport system is so far behind where it should be for an international city of our size, ambition and pace of growth, it is critical that the next government takes steps immediately to put in place a single strategy to catch-up with speed and urgency.

To catch-up and keep pace with projected growth, an ambitious package of immediate and long-term projects that reduce congestion, supports growth & productivity and guarantees access to employment and housing development areas is required.

A firm 10-year investment and construction pipeline that gives long-term certainty and confidence to Aucklanders that improvements will happen is essential. Clarity of a project pipeline of sufficient scale and longevity will also help attract the international investment and construction capacity we need to move action into the fast lane immediately.

It is vital the strategy address huge disconnects that exist between Auckland's urban intensification programme and supporting transport system improvements. To cope with Auckland's population growth the urban development plan proposes expanding suburbs in the North and North West and where residents suffer significant congestion in getting to-from work. Yet the transport solution offered is to retrofit road and public transport improvements that makes congestion worse for the foreseeable future. Clearly, it is the wrong strategy and a 30-year time frame is far too slow.

If the quality of life of Aucklanders within many suburbs is to be protected and enhanced, it is obvious new thinking and alternative urban development ideas are needed.

A long-term option is a new city, located to the south.

The south has the largest potential urban growth area. It is adjacent to water and electricity supply lines, as well as trunk rail and motorway links that can be expanded. The end point would be a new (satellite) city connected to the heart of Auckland by a rapid transit system. Fast, efficient and reliable train services to the new city (and nearby Hamilton and towns in between) would provide a platform on which to accommodate Auckland's long-term population growth.

An upper North Island focus is also required. More than half New Zealand's population lives north of Taupo. The growing interdependence of business, tourism and residential growth between Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga and potentially Northland has created a demand for modern transport infrastructure and travel service choice across the upper North Island.

Completion by 2028 – not 2048 as ATAP propose

To deliver the Strategic Agenda, the Auckland Business Forum calls on the next Government to accelerate and complete delivery of the ATAP (Government-Auckland Council Alignment Project) programme within 10-years – not the 30 years ATAP recommended - and add additional projects of the scale needed for Auckland to cope with its long-term growth.

The Auckland Business Forum's improvements to Auckland's integrated transport network – to be undertaken as a single investment package and delivered in parallel.

Bring urgency to complete long-agreed Auckland Transport (AT) – NZTA projects:

- **North Western Busway, Mill Road extension, AMETI** – within 5 years
- **SH20B to Auckland Airport** - including provision for a rail link to an upgraded Puhinui Railway Station – by 2021 (when Auckland defends the America's Cup and hosts APEC).
- **Grafton Gully (stage 3)** – extend SH16 from Stanley St to Quay St, creating a seamless link from Quay St to the motorway for the 36,000 commuter v/day from-to eastern shoreline suburbs
- **Penlink** - link from SH1 to Whangapararoa Peninsula, and widen SH1 north of Albany to Silverdale
- **East West Link** - (by 2023), and plan and protect a corridor to East Tamaki/ eastern suburbs
- **3rd and 4th Rail lines** – including extending electrification to-from Papakura to Pukekohe, and commuter rail services to Waikato towns located on the main trunk line and Hamilton; and to enable significant increase of rail freight services – i.e. a modern regional rail service for the Golden Economic and Tourism Triangle (Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty).
- Selected rail-road crossing grade separation - (by 2021), essential to ensure the start of the 10-minute City Rail Link train service doesn't bring congestion chaos.
- Dual lane/ peak hour streaming of selected 'congested' arterial routes – e.g. Lake Rd (Takapuna to Devonport).
- Synchronise central city traffic lights
- Complete 3-lane in both directions all Auckland urban motorways
- Complete new alternative 'south city' highway-busway Karaka to Weymouth bridge
- Complete delivery of multi-story Park and Ride buildings at main Busway and train stations, with retail, office and apartment floors, and supported by local feeder bus services.
- Start a city-wide introduction of light rail programme to service areas of Auckland not currently having easy access to train, ferry and efficient bus services; e.g. East Auckland – Manukau – Airport; West Auckland and North Shore.

To give certainty and help attract the international investment and construction capacity required to undertake a programme of this scale and timeline, it is vital the strategy confirms longer-term and higher value projects, including:

- 3rd Waitemata Harbour Crossing – including to extend (light) rail to North Shore
- Extension of SH1 motorway to Whangarei
- Extension of light rail from south (e.g. Paerata) to Airport
- Extend rail commuter services to Bay of Plenty and Rotorua
- Continue route protection for a strategic eastern transport corridor

How will the strategy be paid for?

The work programme set out here is crucial for Auckland's future. The \$30 billion-plus it will cost is obtainable.

Meeting Auckland's funding challenge to fund the package is less about the amount of money required, and more about Auckland with central Government organising themselves better and deciding on an equitable contribution arrangement between them.

The Forum propose that a single, accountable central Government – Auckland Council transport funding role be confirmed to enable the full range of tools and options to resolve the specific issues presented by each major project within the package. A 'whole of project' funding method is required that enables complete transport solutions to be delivered as one project in place of staged development.

About \$20 billion is indicated under traditional funding methods - \$1.3 billion a year from central government (i.e. tax payers) to NZTA, and \$600 million a year to AT from Auckland rate payers.

Debt funding is an option – The around \$2 billion NZTA and Auckland Transport are annually allocated for investment in transport could be the base revenue stream to repay debt on a loan programme for fast-tracking a 10-year work programme.

Other options include:

- Auckland Council optimising the use of its \$60 billion-plus asset portfolio.
- **Value capture revenue streams** – Land development contributions, special rates, parking levies & bonus floor area sales (e.g. from Park 'n ride on NZTA/AC land).

The study Government-Council has announced for officials to take up to 10 years to design a scheme to manage congestion long-term is ill-defined and too far away. Its purpose needs to include raising the revenue Auckland requires to fund improvements to the transport system long-term (i.e. beyond the immediate 10-year programme proposed here).

Options for a new approach to raise revenue for the long-term include:

- Expanding user pays funding tools; e.g. tolls on existing roads (i.e. a network toll) and/or tolls on new roads in addition to petrol excise and road user charges.

The years of inconclusive debate over funding Auckland's transport improvements must end.

What is required from the next Government is fearless and joined up leadership with Auckland Council and the private sector committed to dramatically accelerate the work and investment required to ensure Auckland remains an attractive and successful city to live, work and visit.

The Auckland Business Forum:

Established in 2000 with a purpose to reverse years of inaction and underinvestment that occurred in the second half of last century to build the city's long-planned transport infrastructure network, Auckland Business Forum members include *Auckland Chambers of Commerce, Employers & Manufacturers Association (Northern), Ports of Auckland, Auckland Airport, Civil Contractors NZ, Infrastructure NZ, National Road Carriers*. These organizations represent a cross-section of Auckland industry and commerce whose role includes guardianship of businesses responsible for more than 450,000 Auckland jobs and generating 42% of New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP).

- For more information on the Forum's Strategic Agenda contact chairman Michael Barnett on 0275 631 150 or mbarnett@chamber.co.nz .