



Submission on the Draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2015 - 2025

1. Introduction

The Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Draft 2015/2025 Auckland Regional Land Transport Programme and the Auckland Transport Plan. Consultation with groups such as ours and wider transport stakeholders is vital to achieving better transport outcomes for Auckland.

The CBT is an incorporated society which advocates for alternatives to the private car, with a focus on public transport. The CBT is a voluntary group, is politically independent and receives no funding outside of its membership base.

The CBT espouses the following general principles:

1. Transport is about moving people and freight efficiently.
2. Auckland has a peak time capacity constraint, which provisioning more lanes for single occupant cars won't address.
3. Investment in mass rapid transit is required. This also benefits road users and road users who don't have a choice to use public transport.
4. It is valid for petrol excise tax revenues to be spent on projects that benefit motorists by reducing traffic congestion on roads.
5. A benefit / cost analysis should be used with all transport projects, using a methodology that places value on the reducing reliance on the combustion of fossil fuels and also the reduction of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The Campaign for Better Transport was a member of the Independent Advisory Body which last year examined alternative funding options, including increasing rates and a motorway charge.

2. General Support for the RLTP

The CBT generally supports the draft Regional Land Transport Programme, and would like to congratulate Auckland Transport on the considerable progress that has been made in the last three years, in particular the introduction of electric trains and the AT Hop card.

The draft RLTP document itself is clear and well structured.

The CBT's submission focuses on the following matters:

- Prioritisation and Ranking of Projects
- Specific Projects
- Transport Funding and Alternatives



3. Prioritisation and Ranking of Projects

The ranking process described in Chapter Four's "Business Case" approach is sound; however transport outcomes are being determined by the desires of central Government, which are road focussed and do not reflect Auckland's desire to focus on improvements to public transport. A case in point is last year's announcement to accelerate \$815m worth of roading projects in Auckland.

We therefore disagree with the following statement on page 29 of the RLTP

"There should be relatively few differences between the ATA and NZTA prioritisation, because a similar evaluation methodology is being used and because the strategic transport priorities of Auckland and of Central Government are closely aligned." – p29

The transport priorities of central Government and Auckland are poles apart.

The central Government Policy Statement is summarised on p. 18 as:

- A strong and continuing focus on economic growth and productivity... This is code for the Roads of National Significance. However, there is no proven correlation between motorway expansion projects and economic growth.
- Value-for-money... this is code for public private partnerships. In relation to motorway toll roads, these have been a failure in Australia, yet our Government is pursuing this model for Transmission Gully and most likely for the Puhoi to North Warkworth toll road. The Government has yet to reveal how much the toll will be.
- Road safety... of the three priorities, safety is the most aligned with Auckland's priorities

Auckland Transport should not be supporting any project that has not been subject to even a rudimentary business case or Cost Benefit Analysis. The Puhoi to north Warkworth toll road, for instance, has absolutely no economic analysis to back its construction. This is hardly surprising given that the toll road is just 700m shorter than the existing road, with an accompanying travel time saving of just 3 minutes compared to today.

In the Auckland region, greater emphasis should be placed on projects that focus on moving people and freight effectively, with a priority on mass rapid transit for reasons already stated.

For the good of the environment and the economy, projects which reduce consumption of fossil fuels should also have a higher benefit weighting than those that do not.

Auckland Transport should take note of the cautionary examples of public private partnerships that have failed in Australia, particularly those in Sydney and Brisbane.



4. Specific Projects

Bus Priority

We encourage Auckland Transport to continue rolling out bus priority measures, in particular dedicated bus lanes on high frequency parts of the network. High frequency bus-ways should include:

- A bus-way on the Northwestern motorway, particularly between Waterview and Westgate
- Extension of busway north between Constellation Drive and Albany.

The CBT is also opposed to suggestions that bus corridors be made available for high occupancy vehicles (HOV), since HOVs will be forced to navigate around buses which are stopped for the purposes of boarding passengers.

The City Rail Link

This is a vitally important project, but AT appears to be struggling to explain the benefits to the general public.

The CRL will act for the passenger rail network as the Central Motorway Junction does for the motorway network. Higher train frequencies will be possible. Travel time savings will be significant, particularly for Western Line users. Without the CRL, further expansion of the rail network will not be possible.

Auckland Transport has only recently started explaining these benefits to the public – prior to that it was left to voluntary organisations such as the CBT to respond to misinformation that appeared, and indeed still appears, in letters to the editor and opinion pieces in the press. Auckland Transport should not let unfounded claims such as the CRL having no benefit to those outside of the CBD go unchallenged.

The CBT does not buy in to the Government's notion that rail patronage must reach a 20m annual target for an earlier start date than 2020. There are no prerequisite traffic targets before motorway projects such as Puhoi to North Warkworth are funded, and we don't see why a double standard should exist for rail.

Light Rail

The CBT is cautiously supportive of the recent announcement by Auckland Transport that it is investigating light rail to "fill the transport void" that exists in the southern isthmus for rapid transit.

We eagerly await further detail on specific routes and networks.

Of particular interest to the CBT is the use of light rail to connect the Wynyard Quarter precinct to downtown Auckland. The CBT first proposed the idea of using light rail for this purpose many years ago, as a means of achieving the 70% non-car mode share target set by planners for the area. While we achieved some success with the current heritage tram loop, this was never the full vision of the CBT and we look forward to discussion on how the tramp loop can be expanded to downtown Auckland and be made to accommodate modern light rail.



Third Main

With the growing success of passenger rail in Auckland, we need to ensure capacity is not constrained, not only at Britomart, but also on the Southern and Eastern lines which are used heavily for rail freight. We therefore encourage AT working with KiwiRail to fund and construct the third rail line at Wiri and potentially on the Eastern line as well.

It could be argued that Kiwirail should be reinvesting in the track that it already receives some \$18m annually in track access fees from Auckland Transport.

As the owner and landlord of the Auckland rail network, it would be sensible for Kiwirail to invest more in the network, and recover the costs through an increased charge in exchange for higher passenger rail frequencies. This needs to happen before the opening of the CRL if Kiwirail wants to continue to grow its freight operations. Potentially we see the Government's contribution to the CRL be in the form of a capital injection to Kiwirail, so that not only could the CRL be built, but also the third main as well.

Level Crossing Programme

It is frustrating to note that there does not appear to be much progress or a funding pathway for a programme of work to make level crossings safer. Obviously as train frequencies increase, so too will the potential for more rail accidents involving private vehicles and pedestrians.

Funding for this appears to be absent from KiwiRail under basic transport programme or alternative transport programme, as shown in the table on page 46 of the draft RLTP. Auckland needs to be more vocal about this and come to an arrangement about splitting the cost of grade separation, with a view to bringing the programme forward.

Rail Network	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Capital Expenditure - KiwiRail - Basic transport programme	\$m, inflated	\$m, inflated	\$m, inflated	to 2024/25
Third Rail Line Otahuhu/Wiri KiwiR ITP	0.0	15.4	15.8	-31.3
Auckland Train Control Centre KiwiR ITP	0.0	0.0	10.5	-10.5
Crossovers	0.0	6.4	6.6	-13.0
Signalling Improvements	0.0	1.0	1.1	-2.1
Catchup renewals etc	0.0	16.2	16.7	-32.9
Traction	0.0	12.8	13.2	-26.0
POAL Access Improvements	0.0	10.3	10.5	-20.8
Total KiwiRail network improvements - Basic transport network	0.0	62.2	74.4	-136.6

Dependent on Central Government funding



Integrated Ticketing

Page 51 of the draft RLTP has the following table.

Bus, ferry and multimodal Operational activities	2015/16 \$m, inflated
Bus services and facilities	177.3
Ferry services and facilities	18.5
PT Ticketing, Marketing & Information services	37.3
Bus, ferry and multimodal activities total	233.1

If this is correct, then the cost of public transport ticketing and marketing is more than twice the cost of providing actual public transport services for ferries. It should be of concern that PT ticketing and marketing should be such a high percentage of operational expenditure. It would be informative to break out the \$37.3m figure into component marketing, IS and PT ticketing costs.

Given that AT's most recent financial statement reports public transport ticket revenue of \$53m, it should be a concern if PT ticketing costs are a high percentage of this figure.

True integrated ticketing is now years overdue. When the contract with Thales was announced in December 2009, the expectation from ARTA at the time was that a zone type ticketing system could be implemented within a few years. More than five years later, public transport users are still waiting for a truly integrated public transport ticket.

A ticketing methodology that does not penalise users for transferring between different modes is vital to the establishment of a true public transport network. Without it, the roll-out of a new network of bus services in the South, for instance, will inevitably be delayed.

Absent too from the AT ticketing scheme is provision for off-peak travel and for groups of people travelling, particularly families. It is our view that implementing a family pass would greatly increase the number of weekend trips undertaken on public transport. We commented on this back in October 2012, but nothing appears to have been done to introduce an AT Hop equivalent of the family pass.

This need not be difficult to implement. It could be as easy as permitting children up to the age of 12 to travel free with a Hop card holder. This concession already exists for children under five.

For clarity of communication with the public, the AT Hop card should be the best value for all public transport, including ferry tickets. However, for some reason ferry operators have been allowed to roll out their own ticketing systems (see Fullers Galaxy Pass), which provide cheaper trips for commuters than the AT Hop card. It is difficult to understand how this has been allowed to happen as it creates confusion for members of the public.

AMETI

We support the public transport aspects of the AMETI project, and applaud the descoping of the Reeves Road flyover from the project.

An increasing number of people are travelling via bus from Howick and Pakuranga to transfer to rail services at Panmure. The AMETI project will allow this source of patronage to grow.



Expansion of the Electric Rail Network

The CBT supports the expansion of the electric rail network south to Pukekohe.

It is highly likely that Drury will become an area of high housing growth, and a new station here coupled with expanding the electrified rail network could comprise the first phase of the expansion to Pukekohe.

Airport Rail Route Protection

The CBT has been advocating for a rail link to Auckland airport for over a decade. In that time little practical progress has been made.

The CBT supports bringing forward the designation process to the timeline stated in the Auckland Plan. This is becoming increasingly urgent as potential routes are becoming precluded by the construction of buildings and infrastructure in the airport precinct.

Auckland Transport also needs to look further afield with rail designations. Possible rail routes in the decades ahead include a line on the North Shore and an Upper Harbour designation potentially from Kumeu to the North Shore via Dairy Flat.

Skypath

The CBT supports the Skypath initiative to allow pedestrian and cycling trips across the Harbour Bridge.

Additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing

We are aware that NZTA have already begun the process to designate the route for an additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing.

To date there has not been any public consultation on the mode of any additional harbour crossing. We assume that the NZTA is providing for single occupant vehicles in its intended designation, however we encourage Auckland Transport to pursue a Cost Benefit Analysis of alternatives before any significant, irrevocable work proceeds.

In our view, an additional vehicular crossing will flood the CBD with single occupant vehicles, and congestion will still likely occur on the Northern Motorway and the CMJ approaches.

Again, we emphasise the need to consider projects that focus on moving people and freight, not single occupant cars.



5. Transport Funding and Alternatives

Support for Essential Transport Budget

The CBT supports the “Essential Transport Budget” initiative from Generation Zero, which has the Congestion Free Network concept at its core.

Auckland Council’s transport budget options in the Long Term Plan offer a false choice. Build everything in the Auckland Plan Network at the cost of finding an extra \$300 million a year in alternative funding, or delay important public transport improvements and the city cycling network in the Basic Network Plan. The obvious middle ground would be to prioritise the projects that deliver public transport and cycling improvements, and delay non-essential projects to save money.

Funding

Any alternative funding stream is reliant on the input of central Government.

Currently central Government is committed to increasing petrol tax by 3c a litre in July of next year. We think Auckland Transport needs to be leading the debate on where this tax on Aucklanders should be best spent.

Recent correspondence from the CBT to the Minister of Transport proposed a “variable” fuel tax:

The recent drop in the retail price of petrol gives rise to the opportunity to introduce a variable fuel tax on petrol and diesel. Such a tax could potentially be a significant amount per litre, but would also be removed when petrol climbs above a certain threshold again (for instance \$1.90) to improve public acceptability.

The Minister of Transport responded that “there are a number of issues with a variable fuel tax that means it would have unintended consequences and be difficult to implement.” The full text of the reply is available from the www.bettertransport.org.nz

Given that central Government has already ruled out supporting motorway congestion charging, and are reluctant to use the existing fuel tax mechanism to fund Auckland’s suggested transport budget shortfall, it is vitally important that we identify the transport projects that will be of most benefit to Aucklanders, and seek to prioritise these.

6. Submitter Details

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