



Submission on the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010 - 2040

Introduction

The Campaign for Better Transport is a voluntary incorporated society that is entirely funded from member subscriptions. We currently have over 90 paid members.

The Campaign for Better Transport would like to thank the ARC for their continued strong stance in support of public transport for Auckland. There is a common misconception, particularly from central Government at the moment, that groups like the Campaign for Better Transport are attempting to force people away from personalised transport and reduce personal freedom. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, we are advocating that in a civilised, built up city such as Auckland, people have a right to a range of transport choices to meet their various needs.

Having a decent public transport network and active modes of transport available represents choice and freedom for thousands of people every day. The freedom to get around the city without having to own a car. The freedom to walk and cycle in safety without fear of other traffic.

Reducing the levels of car ownership per household in Auckland is crucial for our economic growth, yet current transport planning practices still heavily promote single occupant car use at peak times of the day, which is a demonstrably inefficient use of resources, both for the individual and the region as a whole.

The challenge is to give more people more transport choice in a cost effective manner, and the Campaign For Better Transport sees the proposed Regional Land Transport Strategy as an effective way of moving towards this goal.

However, we believe that the combination of declining global oil supplies and the increasing expectation that carbon emissions have to be actively reduced means that the proposed Regional Land Transport Strategy should be even more heavily oriented towards sustainable modes of transport.

For these reasons, we believe that Option 4, the so-called "Quantum Shift", should be the preferred option, and that the RLTS should clearly state this.

The remainder of this submission details aspects of the RLTS that we submit should be amended, but it should be kept in mind that our overall position is one of strong support for the strategy.



Vision

The Vision section of the RLTS should be the main driver for the entire strategy. The opening sentence is promising:

"The vision describes the transport system in 30 years (by 2040)..."

What is remarkable about what follows, then, is that there is no attempt whatsoever to describe the external factors that will dictate transport choices in 2040. Namely:

- Extremely high oil prices brought about by significant decreasing supply within the period of the strategy
- The global expectation that real, practical measures to reduce carbon emissions have to be made within the next decade, at the very least.

On the first point, a brief analysis of the outlook for oil prices is contained in Chapter 3 – Challenges - Section 3.3 Access and Mobility, with the pivotal statement that "In the next ten years, oil prices are expected to be volatile, with petrol and diesel prices potentially stabilising at around \$3 per litre."

We submit that the Vision section of the document should highlight oil price and carbon emission assumptions as well.

Challenges

Oil price analysis should have its own "Energy Sustainability" section in the Chapter 3, and not lumped in with Access and Mobility.

There is also an apparent inconsistency with the oil price forecast of "\$3 a litre in the next ten years" with the "best estimate of \$3.71 by 2041" on page 39 of the RLTS.

Specific targets for each Challenge are a welcome tool in this RLTS.

The Strategy

Reliance on Models

Heavy reliance appears to be placed on the computer modelling of each scenario, with very precise outcomes forecast. For instance:

"Vehicle use declines from around 87% in 2006 to around 74% in 2041. Given the assumed growth of Auckland, however the expected increase in vehicle travel in the order of 45%."

If this is the case then there are quite a few inherent assumptions included in the model that might not be valid, for instance:

- the price of fuel as a result of declining production or ETS related charges
- the availability of alternative fuel cars and trucks

In recent years in Auckland a number of public transport and roading projects have been completed. It isn't clear if the modelling reflects the real-life patronage and usage outcomes. In any case, it would be useful if the RLTS summarised recent projects such as the Northern Busway, Spaghetti Junction / Grafton Gully, SH20 extension and documented the performance indicators and outcomes that have been achieved.



The Campaign For Better Transport

We know from previous modelling that public transport projects have generally underestimated patronage, so it would be comforting to know that this has been taken on board and incorporated into the patronage modelling used in this RLTS.

Transport Energy Price

Under this heading on p42, it is claimed from the model that:

"At a petrol price of \$6.00 it is expected that car trips would decline by nine per cent and PT trips would increase by 33 per cent, relative to the forecasts using a price of \$3.71 per litre used in all the option testing."

A nine percent reduction in car use seems a remarkably small drop for a 62% increase in petrol price. It would be helpful if the RLTS provided information on how this was derived, and how the relatively high petrol prices of 2008 impacted on car use.

Parking Measures (p43)

We submit that any discussion on parking measures should include the removal of minimum parking requirements.

These requirements effectively force developers to spend a significant amount of money on off-street parking that only encourages people to drive to work or to shopping. The money spent by developers is recouped through higher prices at stores, lower wages for workers and in the residential sector through higher rents and house-prices – effectively it becomes a significant hidden subsidy paid for by everyone, but only enjoyed by those who drive.

Feeder Bus Services and Intermodal Scheduling

The RLTS makes mention of integrated ticketing and fares, but less so of integrated schedules. There are numerous examples in Auckland of poorly co-ordinated timetables between bus and train modes, for example.

Rather than the bus services competing with rail, we would like to see more bus services complementing rail. "Feeder" buses in particular should be implemented suit local circumstances and could at least initially use small to mid-size buses.

We believe that such services would help relieve the demand for park and ride facilities at major transport nodes such as Albany and Constellation Drive.

It isn't just intermodal scheduling which is poor. Even the newly opened Newmarket station does not have optimum scheduling of trains to allow West – South transfers, and vice versa.

Miscellaneous Notes

The chart on p. 35 should presumably read litres / 100km on the y axis.



Timeframes

Pages 69-71 of the RLTS detail the timeframes for a number of substantial public transport projects. These include the following:

1. CBD Rail Link (by 2021)
2. Rail electrification (by 2013)
3. Integrated ticketing and fares (within 10 years)
4. Northern Busway extension (in two stages: first by 2031 and second by 2040)
5. Airport Rail Loop (by 2040)
6. Avondale-Southdown Rail Connection (by 2040)
7. Panmure-Botany-Manukau City Centre QTN/RTN (QTN to be progressed ASAP, upgraded to RTN by 2031)
8. Henderson-Westgate-Albany connection (QTN during period of strategy, possible upgrade to RTN in the future)
9. North Shore Rail (busway likely to approach capacity by end of RLTS period, so investigation into rail should continue)

We submit that the above timetable lacks any urgency, and we urge the RLTS to be more aggressive with the suggested timeframes.

In particular, it is submitted that the timeline of "within 10 years" for integrated ticketing is totally underwhelming, considering the tender for an integrated ticketing platform has just been let. We suggest a realistic timeframe of three years to achieve this project.

In comparison with previous Strategies, it appears that the Airport Rail Loop has slipped by a decade, as has the Avondale Southdown Connection.

We submit that "completion of the public transport network" should be as much a rallying cry as "completing the roading network". Rail linkages to the airport and between Onehunga and Avondale are critical components of the public transport network and they deserve a much higher priority.

With the announcement of NZTA's preferred Auckland Harbour crossing, rail to the North Shore needs to be further planned and integrated into the Auckland Harbour Crossing project.

We agree with the intention to provide a Quality Transit Network (QTN) along the Panmure-Botany-Manukau City Centre corridor as soon as possible. Statistically, this is the most car-dependent part of the whole Auckland region and suffers from a very slow bus service at the moment (buses take longer to travel from Howick to the CBD than from Orewa to the CBD for example).



Consideration of Trams/Light-Rail

It is submitted that the RLTS should give greater consideration to the use of trams/light-rail along a number of QTN routes. Trams can provide significant benefits over bus lanes in terms of route capacity, urban design effects, ride-quality and (based on international evidence) patronage.

A number of routes in Auckland may become suitable for trams over the next 30 years, including Dominion Road, Queen Street, Tamaki Drive, Wynyard Quarter/Tank Farm and Great North Road (between the city and Pt Chevalier) among others. The RLTS should be altered to reflect the possibility of operating trams along some important routes where it may have advantages over simple bus lanes.

Summary Responses to Consultation Questions

1. Do you agree with the long term strategy contained in the RLTS?

The Campaign for Better Transport supports Option 4 – Quantum Shift

2. How do you think the required expenditure on transport in Auckland should be funded?

A mix of funding sources should be available.

- Rates are a valid funding source, as improved transport infrastructure has a material effect on property prices, particularly for transport projects where outlying areas made more accessible.
- Road users and public transport users should both contribute funding.
- Central Government needs to fund public transport and rail projects with the same willingness that it shows for funding more roading capacity for the private motorist.

3. What other ways could we raise funds?

The Campaign for Better Transport supported the introduction of the regional fuel tax as a way of funding public transport infrastructure projects. As motorists benefit from improved public transport patronage, we see the use of fuel taxes as an equitable funding source. We think it appropriate that, at the very least, a certain percentage of the current petrol excise tax be made available to projects at the discretion of local councils.

4. Do you think the strategy will be enough to deliver the contribution needed from transport to energy and climate change issues?

No. It would be helpful if an option was provided in the strategy that met NZTS targets.

We would like to appear at the Hearings in support of our submission.

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