

AUCKLAND BUSINESS FORUM

Outcome: Integrated Transport Network

AUCKLAND BUSINESS FORUM SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENT ON LAND TRANSPORT 2018/19 – 2027/28

1. The Auckland Business Forum welcomes the opportunity to submit to the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018/19 – 2027/28 (GPS 2018)
2. Address for service is:
 - Auckland Business Forum project co-ordinator, Tony Garnier, email: tg.vsg@clear.net.nz, phone (09) 368 7772 or Box 28-147, Remuera, Auckland.

CONTEXT

3. The Auckland Business Forum comprises:
 - *Auckland Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry*
 - *Employers & Manufacturers Association (Northern) Incorporated*
 - *Ports of Auckland Limited*
 - *Auckland Airport Limited*
 - *Civil Contractors NZ*
 - *Infrastructure New Zealand*
 - *National Road Carriers (Inc).*
4. 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).
5. The Auckland Business Forum (Forum) was established in 2000 out of frustration at the increasing time-cost to businesses - estimated at more than \$1 billion annually – due to Auckland's severe traffic congestion, years of inaction and under-investment to build the city's long-planned transport infrastructure network.
6. The Forum's specific interest in land transport is from the perspective that Auckland's *“commercial and industrial traffic, which is critical to the city's economy, is wholly dependent on an efficient road transport network”*.¹
7. The Forum pursues initiatives to encourage transport infrastructure providers to take an **“integrated network approach;”** i.e. design and implement a transport system that provides a ‘catch-up’ to the chronic underinvestment that occurred in the second half of last century and gets in front of the increased transport demand generated by the recent surge in population and urban growth, and which is forecast to continue indefinitely.
8. The acceleration in the pace and scale of Auckland's growth in the last few years is reflected not just by the increased number of people settling in Auckland – estimated at between 100-125 people every day – but also a substantial increase in visitors to Auckland; international

¹ *“Auckland State Highway Strategy,”* Transit NZ, December 2000, p4.

tourists, business visitors and people from neighbour regions attending the many sporting and other events that take place every week.

9. This growth is reflected by an increase in vehicle trips, estimated at around 10% over the past three years or 360,000 more daily trips. Auckland Transport data indicates public transport boardings have increased by more than 20% over the past three years. Rail patronage has also grown significantly, although less than 5% of commuters have easy access to the rail system.
10. As a result of Auckland's explosive growth, the motorway and arterial road network has become increasingly congested. In many areas of Auckland – north, south, west and east – there is a noticeable reduction in performance, with congestion 'impacts' spreading well beyond so-called normal peak hours.
11. Arguably, a sense of 'crises' pervades; commuters, commerce and bus services (especially on the cross-city arterial road network in parts of the North Shore and east-west Auckland) operate in an environment of uncertainty and unreliability.
12. Ferry service patronage is also increasing, but investment in the development of infrastructure and new services is unexplored against an obvious potential, given that most Aucklanders live within 4km of one of its three large harbours.
13. An over arching view of the Auckland Business Forum, as communicated in depth elsewhere, is that the response of transport authorities to Aucklanders very evident demand for improved transport infrastructure and services is significantly under-cooked and inadequate.

Submission scope

14. This submission is mainly at a high level and gives strong support to encouraging the GPS 2018 to be strengthened to better recognise the dramatic step-up in response and scale of initiatives required if Auckland is to get in front of the huge pressures the fast pace of growth is putting on the city's transport networks.
15. Key submission points are:
 - The stronger focus required in GPS 2018 on the transport investment needed to enable and support growth – e.g. more targeted investments designed to (measurably) reduce congestion.
 - Ensuring transport providers are fully resourced, co-ordinated and supported to deliver an agreed and widely publicised single (joined-up) transport investment strategy with the required speed and urgency. This could be a firmed-up, funded ATAP agency being made responsible to deliver the agreed strategy to an accelerated time line.
 - Suggested word changes to help the GPS to better reflect the real extent of Auckland's transport 'crises' and where transport investment needs to be targeted.

ENABLING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

16. The draft GPS 2018 recognises growth as a strategy priority to be supported by government transport investment, including through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).

17. The Forum notes that a “Supporting Growth: Delivering transport networks” agenda has been prepared jointly by NZTA, Auckland Transport and Auckland Council and which the Government is taking ownership of.
18. The ‘supporting growth’ document indicates that Auckland Council and Government are planning for a big growth of population (houses and businesses) in three areas of the city - the north (Warkworth, Silverdale, Wainui and Dairy Flat), northwest (Hobsonville, Whenuapai, Kumeu/Huapai) and south (Takinini, Drury, Pukekohe). In respect of peak hour traffic, commuters and the affected local area businesses/ communities are already suffering significantly from the impacts of congestion on the motorways and arterials that give access to-from these suburbs.
19. However, in the north, northwest and most of the south areas that have been targeted for intensive growth there is no railways, and no mass transit planned. These areas therefore will, it appears, be reliant on road transport for the foreseeable future – roads that in many cases are already heavily congested.
20. That is, there needs to be a strengthened commitment in the GPS 2018 to provide new local infrastructure to support areas that have been ‘live’ and ‘future’ zoned for residential development in the new Unitary Plan. This need applies as much in the north as in the south and west, and possibly more so given that there is no possibility of a combined trunk arterial rail – local bus public transport service option for people wanting access to-from northern areas of Auckland to the work areas in central Auckland and the industrial/ commercial belt between Onehunga and East Tamaki.

ENABLING FUNDING CERTAINTY FOR AN ACCELERATED PROGRAMME

21. The draft GPS 2018 indicates that the funding required to implement the “supporting growth’ transport investment have not been incorporated. In the Forum’s view, this omission makes GPS 2018 incomplete.
22. However, the Forum welcomes the clear “expectation” that NZTA “will take a lead role in advancing the Auckland strategic approach”. There is also a welcome line item indicating intentions to “accelerate” eleven state highway projects in Auckland.
23. Elsewhere the Forum has indicated to Government and Auckland Council the view that the ATAP objectives, and which are covered in the draft GPS 2018 (paragraphs 172-174), will only succeed if the pace of action to solve the city’s immediate transport issues is dramatically lifted.
24. The Forum would therefore welcome some further strengthening of the GPS document to reinforce evident intentions to confirm and accelerate delivery of the ‘indicative’ Auckland package much sooner than the 2018-28 decade indicated in ATAP’s September 2016 report.
25. Following the publication of the ATAP report, the Forum put forward suggestions designed to achieve and support the urgently required accelerated programme Auckland needs. These cover the bullets below:
 - A significantly strengthened ATAP governance, project management, stakeholder consultation and reporting arrangement.

- A clear description or outcome statement (complete with maps) of the single joined-up 30 year transport strategy and story for which Auckland is crying out for.
- A confirmed work programme to prepare business cases by mid-2017 on the priority transport investments identified in the strategy, with a view to seeking 'call in' consent hearings, funding and procurement to enable implementation of the package within 10 years (by the end of 2026).
- The preparation of the business case and consent application 'packages' to be undertaken with a mindset that required funding for the 10-year programme will be found.
- Strong encouragement and support for Auckland Council to develop and confirm in its 2017-18 Annual Plan alternative and creative revenue raising options available to Council.
- Confirmed terms of reference and road map to develop and introduce as soon as practicable the proposed 'smarter transport pricing' (or user-pay) scheme for funding transport investments long-term; certainly far sooner than the 2028 target date indicated in the ATAP report.

26. The buried line item in the draft GPS 2018 indicating an intention to 'accelerate' a package of Auckland projects, and encouragement to NZTA to "take a lead role" in advancing the Auckland transport investment agenda are small steps, but welcome, against the dramatically lifted approach the Forum believes is required for Auckland to get on top of its solvable transport problems.

27. As indicated by the draft GPS notes that the funding requirements of the ATAP have not been confirmed, it therefore follows that GPS 2018 clearly remains a work in progress.

28. How to enable funding certainty for the urgently needed/ agreed accelerated Auckland investment programme to the scale required to make a measurable improvement to travelling around Auckland is at the heart of the city's transport issues, and which the Forum continues to be engaged in seeking solutions.

IMPORTANT WORD CHANGES

29. Finally, to reflect some of these high level points, we have identified some word changes to consider including in the finalised GPS 2018. They mainly relate to:

- Strengthening the messaging in respect of the transport investment required to achieve a measurable difference in economic growth and productivity;
- Providing a more representative picture of the extent of Auckland's congestion problems and how, currently, the high urban growth areas identified in the "supporting growth" package risks significantly increasing Auckland's congestion unless supported by an appropriate transport investment package embracing specific needs of key customers (commuters, distribution & freight, commercial/trade services, travel at weekends and to key hubs such as Auckland Airport, central city and sport & recreation events)
- Injecting into the document a greater sense of understanding of the crises-like scale of Auckland's transport issues and the commitment required to "accelerate" delivery of solutions. The expectation of NZTA being resourced to take a stronger "lead" in advancing the solutions is a step towards adoption of the Forum's long-held view of Auckland needing a single transport investment and service provider agency.

30. Paragraph 40: At end of first sentence suggest a rewording to reflect that “..... the current drivers of transport demands need to be recognised at all levels of transport policy and management.”
- Of specific concern to the Forum is that while NZTA (Upper North Island) has a well developed recognition of the freight sector requirements, this is less apparent at local government level (including road design, parking, noise etc).
31. Paragraph 47: Maybe make a reference to the growth areas identified in the “Supporting growth” document, given it has been published as a virtual bible of the transport developments needed to support the Auckland Unitary Plan’s future growth areas. In particular:
- The second bullet reference to decline in access to jobs and education, ... for people in the west and the south, doesn’t fully describe the scale of the impact congestion and lack of adequate public transport is having Auckland-wide.
 - There are also access issues affecting liveability in the east and north. The issues in the north are becoming particularly acute, affecting reliability of bus services to-from the city as well as employment access both locally (Silverdale), health service access, getting to airport, sale of houses for people wanting to shift away from having to start going to work at 5am etc, etc.
 - The point: the decline in access is not just to jobs and education; and is not just for people living in west and the south.
 - Given that the Unitary Plan’s intensified growth is planned to occur in the north, west and south, a suggested word change is: “addressing projected declines in access to jobs, education and other services affecting quality of life, particularly for people living in the south, west and north....”
32. Paragraph 47, fourth bullet: The emphasis needs to change from “relieve” congested corridors, to focus on improving economic growth and productivity. Suggested word change:
- “Increasing public transport services and use to enable more certainty for distribution of freight and trade services and other traffic contributing to improving economic productivity”
 - Maybe look at giving support to some value add projects to help boost public transport; e.g. every park-and-ride ‘station’ in Auckland (road and rail) is an opportunity for a multi-story ‘tower’ park and ride building. Most large cities link trunk public transport services to local public transport services from a hub centre which also includes substantial parking. If park-and-ride and local feeder services were assured, thousands more Aucklanders would use the trunk rail and bus services.
33. Paragraph 172-174: Maybe reinforce the GPS & Minister’s ‘expectation” with a bullet or additional paragraph calling for forming of a joint working group of NZTA/AT, in which NZTA chairs, and the working group advances an implementation programme agreed by the ATAP sponsors against an agreed budget and time line.
- The programme would include milestones and reporting against milestones to sponsors (Minister and Mayor) every fortnight, 4pm Fridays.

- FYI: When the NSW government and Sydney some years ago were struggling to put in place that cities critical transport system, a single project was formed in which the delivery agency was required to report weekly to the NSW Transport Minister, every Friday. ((More information can supplied if this is of interest))
- The point: The delivery of Auckland's transport solution needs to step up from a 'project' focus (in which contractors are accountable) to delivery of a network and supporting services (for which transport provider agencies are accountable).

(ends)