



Submission of Civic Trust Auckland

Draft Auckland Regional Public Transport Plan

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1. Routes

- The CBD is the destination for some customers but not all, there being a need for more routes and higher frequencies for cross-city travel.
- We applaud the proposed higher frequency of services on both the RTN and the QTN, noting that infrequent service coupled with unreliable service is a major disincentive to public transport use.
- The LCN 60-min service is not frequent enough.
- Smaller buses could be gradually brought in to replace larger buses and to provide a more frequent service.
- Drivers need to be trained to know the route they are driving to the extent that they can name the roads on their route, in order to assist with customer enquiries.

2. 24-hour Public Transport

- A 24-hour public transport service would contribute greatly to the RLTS goal of “*a transport system which enhances the Auckland region as a great place to live, work and play*”.
- Small buses or some way of integrating with taxis at a cheaper rate could be used for off-peak travel

3. Timetables

- Timetables need to be available at all stops/stations.
- At bus stops the streets that the bus drives along need to be listed, to enable customers to plan their journeys.
- We regard as important the following action (under 5.4 in the Plan): “*work with operators to monitor actual travel times and modify timetables as required to provide customers with a high standard of service reliability*”.
- The corollary to the above would be to ensure that the public knows about the changes.

4. Signalling Bus Drivers

- Some customers experience difficulty in signalling the driver to stop.
- Clearer signage on the buses (especially during the hours of darkness) would help in this case.
- The orange LED signs on buses have been observed to work the best.

5. Driver Training

Driver training in customer interaction is seen in the Plan as important *“in shaping attitudes and building patronage”*.

- The following action (under 5.4) would seem to be essential for all staff in contact with customers: *“Require driver, crew and staff training as a condition of contract”*.
- Experience of a driver’s poor people skills and/or driving skills is a frequent complaint and a major disincentive to using buses.
- It is good to see that assistance for people with disabilities is part of driver training.
- Training should also include sensitivity towards the needs of those for whom English is not the first language.
- We would like to know how drivers are trained to approach customers regarding their eligibility for a concession.
- We would like to know what training is given in how to treat customers in general.

6. Customer Feedback

- There should be easy provision to both criticise and commend public transport operators.
- A method that would seem to be effective is placing a comment in a suggestion box on a bus/train/ferry.

7. Fares

The Plan states that, *“The price of travel to customers must ... also provide an acceptable return to offset the cost of service provision”*. Further, that, *“A concession may also be offered if it will contribute to achieving other objectives such as reducing the growth of congestion or providing a safety improvement”*.

- Public transport makes a valuable contribution to the region in terms of: lower emissions, less need for roads and reduced congestion.
- One person using public transport usually means one less car on the road.
- All public transport users contribute to the above benefits, as well as those of reduced health costs, reduced need for new roads, reduced pollution, less time and stress spent on getting to places on time.
- The fare charged impacts on whether people venture forth to spend money on retail, entertainment and services. Such expenditure we consider to be *“a clear benefit to the whole region”*.
- We submit that there should always be available on public transport a cash option for payment of fares for the following customers: tourists, those for whom English is not their first language, infrequent users and those who are unable to understand any form of ticketing other than an on-the-spot exchange of cash for a physical ticket.

8. Integrated Ticketing

- We strongly support integrated ticketing and the speedy introduction of this.

9. Engine Noise

A policy (under 5.5) states: *“Ensure that engine noise from public transport vehicles is kept to a minimum”*.

- A major complaint about buses is the loudness of the noise they make, especially when pulling away from a stop.
- More hybrid electric buses would help to alleviate the noise problem.

10. Vehicle Emissions

- We would like to know the levels set by the NZTA standards for emissions.

11. Bike Racks

- We are aware that the NZ Transport Agency is currently consulting on a rule change which would allow the fitting of bike racks onto public buses. We support this rule change, i.e. section 7.1(3) of the Draft Land Transport Rule: Omnibus Amendment 2009 Rule 10005.

12. TVs on Buses

- The presence of televisions on the Link service should be reconsidered, as some passengers find them intrusive.

13. Bus Lanes

- There is a perception from some of the public that bus lanes have not been successful in getting bus passengers more quickly to their destination during peak time.
- There is also a perception that buses and bicycles sharing the same lane does not work well.
- The facility for buses to pull into a bus stop “bay” and thus out of the traffic lane would seem to work well.
- It would seem sensible to allow private vehicles to use bus lanes when there is a bus strike in progress.
- There needs to be more clarity on the rules regarding use of bus lanes by other road users, including wider publicity about the amended rule regarding bus lanes that came into force on 1 November 2009.
- We would like to know the extent and outcome of ARTA’s studies into the success of bus lanes overseas.

14. Consultation with Operators

- We applaud the intention to “*consult operators, passengers and the public in the affected area in the course of service planning and reviews prior to procurement*”. We would like to know how this is/would be done.
- It is assumed that the views of operators have been canvassed on other issues relevant to them.

15. Promoting Public Transport

- We propose the adoption of one region-wide free public transport day per month as a means to promote public transport, as per the aim of “*encouraging those who do not normally use public transport to trial it and become a regular user*”.
- We applaud the policy to “*Ensure that public transport services are introduced to new urban areas before car habits become established*”.

16. Use of the terms “RTN” and “QTN”

- We note (e.g. page 3 of the Plan) that the terms “Rapid Transit System (RTN)” and “Quality Transit System (QTN)” are used and suggest that these should be “Rapid Transit Network” and “Quality Transit Network”, the latter terms being used subsequently in the Plan.

17. Public Transport Information

- The MAXX telephone service should be available before the hours of 6.00am/6.30am and after 8.00pm/9.00pm to enable customers more opportunity to plan their trips.
- If there is 24-hour public transport (as we submit) then the telephone service obviously needs to also be 24 hours.
- It is good to see that the phone book listings for MAXX are in a number of different places customers might look for the MAXX phone number.

18. Private Transport

- There needs to be continuing discussion about use of cars in Auckland, emphasizing the important role public transport plays in “*reducing the impacts that excessive vehicle travel can have on congestion, safety, public health and environmental outcomes*”.

19. Total Mobility

- We submit that there need to be more Total Mobility vans so that the transport disadvantaged don't have to book their travel several days in advance.
- We would like to see consideration given to the provision for mobility scooters on buses.
- The access to and space on buses for mobility scooters could also be taken advantage of by strollers, bicycles, wheelchairs and luggage.
- When not used for these purposes standing passengers could use the space allocated.

20. Best Practice

- The aim to "*promote global best practice across the entire network in terms of operational performance - reliability, punctuality and all aspects of customer service*" suggests that overseas models have been studied for their workability and that ARTA practices have been informed by these.
- We submit that the Auckland region can learn from and adopt transport strategies and practices that have been used successfully elsewhere.

21. Future Services

- We note with concern that a rail route from the airport is indicated in the Plan only as a "possible longer-term improvement in the RTN". We see the provision of this service as a priority.
- We would like to see the opening of the Onehunga line prioritised (this line having been due to open in 2009).
- We support the establishment of a commuter line between Auckland and Hamilton.
- We would like to see expansion of the ferry services.
- We favour the development of park and ride facilities beside the ferry wharves.
- We would like to see provision on Queens Wharf for additional bus terminals with convenient access to Britomart rail terminal and the ferry wharves.

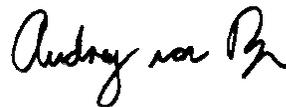
22. Other Public Transport Options

- We submit that consideration be given to further options within the public transport network, as well as alternative funding, in particular regarding:
 - Trams
 - Rapid rail
 - An overhead RTN.

We wish to speak in support of our submission at a public hearing.

Date of submission: 24 December 2009

Signature:



Board Member, Civic Trust Auckland